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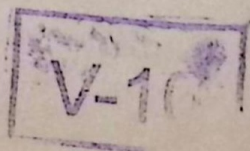
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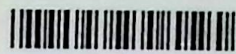


A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

Volume II

Part II

*'Think, in this battered Caravansarai,
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultān after Sultān with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way'.*



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A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION

VOLUME II
PART II

(Medieval Period)
Culture & Civilisation

K.P. BAHADUR



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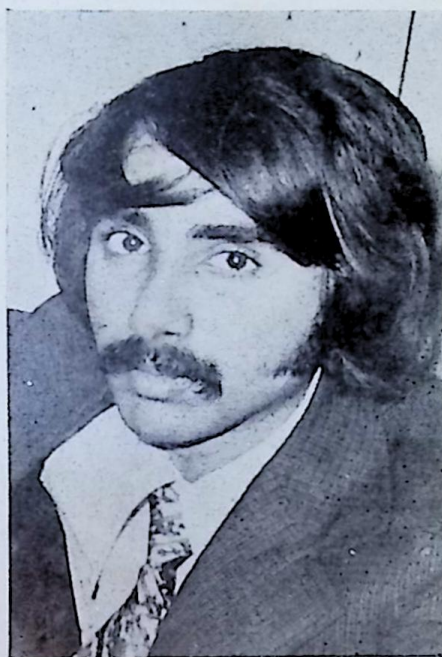
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This book is dedicated to

my beloved son

SANJAY RAHADUR

(24th February 1950—26th May 1980)



Action is transitory,—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle, this way or that—
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark
And shares the nature of infinity.

—Wordsworth

Introduction

The Muslim conquest brought, to begin with, a lot of misery and suffering. Massacres, forced conversions destruction of idols and temples were bound to leave a feeling of horror and disgust in the minds of those who suffered. Curiously enough the Muslim invaders seemed to think they were doing all this in the name of Islām. Sultān Mahmūd's secretary Al-'utbī records 'Islām or death was the alternative that Mahmūd put before the people'. Yet Islām itself advocates tolerance to people of other faiths. The *Qurān* says: 'Reville not those unto whom they pray beside Allah lest they revile God wrongfully through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have we made their deeds seems fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do'.¹ Muslim rulers and generals, however, seemed to think that the killing of Hindus (infidels, as they called them), desecrating their temples and showing contempt for their religion (it was not unusual to pave the steps of mosques with fragments of Hindu idols), conferred upon them some kind of religious merit. It was usual for Muslim emperors to assume the title of *ghāzī* which means 'slayer of infidels'. Akbar earned his by slaying the unarmed captive, Hīmū. At the battle of Haldīghāt, fought between Rānā Pratāp and the Mughal forces under Āsaf Khān, there were Rājput soldiers on

1 *Qurān*, 10:109 (translation Pickthall).

each side shooting their arrows at each other, which quite confused the historian, Badāūnī, who was an eye-witness. But Āsaf Khān laconically remarked 'On whichever side they may be killed, it will be a gain to Islām'.

Despite this unpleasant beginning, Islamic religion and culture gradually found a home in India. Hindu religious thought is so eclectic and broad based that there is hardly a tenet which will not find in it a parallel. Thus the Islāmic concept of a one, impersonal, all-powerful and merciful God was evolved in India by the advaitists long before the Muslims came to India. If the Muslims had desisted from their misconceived and ill-advised persecution, the fusion, of the two cultures would have come much earlier. The Muslim *jihad* took the awe struck Hindus completely by surprise. The idea of a crusade for imposing a religion on others was something new, for normally such crusades were undertaken to protect one's own religion from persecution rather than to foist it on others. The ensuing killings, abductions, torture and economic hardship, left bitter memories. Describing the Gāhaḍavala king Vijayachandra's successful military campaign against the Muslims, a Hindu poet wrote 'the flow of tears from the eyes of the widows of Muslim heroes killed in battle quenched the heat of torment caused by Muslims.'²

The Sūfī saints provided the meeting point of the two religions. Their creed had much in common with the *bhaktī* cult in India, although most probably the two grew up independently. Like the *bhaktī* saints, the Sūfīs were Muslim mystics who aimed at rapturous union with God. With them Hindu religion received appreciation for the first time.

They realised that the condemned and despised infidel, had after all his good points. One of the Sūfīs said:

'O you who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu
Learn also from him how worship is done'.³

Unfortunately, however, toleration never remained a steady

2 *Epigraphia Indica*, IV:119.

3 K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, Asia, 1961, p. 263 *op. cit.*

process. Its extent varied from one ruler to another according to his own personal attitude, for as the *Gītā* says: 'Whatsoever a great man does that very thing other men also do'.⁴ Some of the Muslim Sultāns and emperors, as for example Firūz Tughluq and Aurangzīb, were irreconcilably bigoted, while others like Muhammad Tughluq, Akbar and Jahāngīr, believed in allowing people to practice their own faith.

Turning from religion to art and letters we find the position happier. True, Islām prohibited the reproduction of living beings in paintings or in any other manner, yet Muslim rulers generally did not put any restrictions on Indian artists in this respect. Painting flourished all through the Muslim period, particularly in the time of Akbar, Jahāngīr and Shāh Jāhan. Portraits of the rulers and their families, were made in large numbers. The Deccan, Kāshmir, Patnā and Lucknow styles of painting had predominantly Muslim characteristics. The Indo-Saracen school of painting was, as Sarkar says 'the richest contribution of the Muslims'. At the same time a number of indigenous styles like the Rājput, Pahaṛī and so forth, were developed.

Book illustration was another popular art with the Muslims. Humāyūn brought many Persian artists with him who were expert in it. The introduction of paper helped this art. Many manuscripts were finely written and tastefully illustrated, as for example *Akbar-nāma*, *Dāstān-i-Amīr Hamzāh*, and *Kazmnāma*. Copies of the *Qurān* and other books on religion were adorned with gold borders on every page. They were attractively bound and lettered in gold. Calligraphy was widely cultivated, and a number of persons who wrote beautiful letters earned their living out of it.

Music was another art zealously patronised by Muslim rulers. Contributions to its development were made by Hindus and Muslims alike. *Khiyal* was invented by Sultān Husain Shāh Sharqī of Polpur, while the *dhrupad rāgā* was a Hindu gift. The Muslims gave Persian names to many Indian musical instruments, like the *sarōd*, *dilrubā*, *rabāb* and *tāūs*. The Sūfī mystics took recourse to music to aid spiritual progress. Akbar was a great patron of music, and a number of outstanding musicians

4 *Bhagavad Gītā*, III:21.

like Tānsen, Bābā Rāmādāsa, Bābā Haridāsa, Bāz Bahādur etc. frequented his court.

The greatest contribution of the Muslims, however, was in architecture. Mosques, tombs, palaces and cities were built by them. They achieved beautiful mural designs in letters and symmetry and proportion in their buildings. Many of the mosques were the congregational type known as *jāmi'* *masjids* (Friday mosques). The *jāmi'* mosque had a long open rectangular court surrounded by colonnades on all four sides, the one nearest to Mecca deeper than the others, and forming the sanctuary. In the centre of the back wall of the sanctuary and on its inner side, was a niche (*mihrāb*) with a pointed head indicating the direction of Mecca, facing which Muslims prayed. A minaret with a tall slender tower was built for the muezzin to announce the call to worship. A large mosque had several minarets, arches and latticed windows. Tomb-mosques, had masonry or brick domes.

Although Muslims who commissioned the works of architecture, embodied their ideas, the craftsmen who actually executed them were mostly Hindus, and they moulded these ideas to their own styles and methods of working. The Hindu craftsmen were skilful in stone work and hardly ever used lime. So we find many buildings in stone. Arches and domes were very popular with Muslims but Hindu workers were not adept in making them. So Muslim rulers had to content themselves with 'horizontal corbelled constructions' which came as near as possible to these features, and which the masons could easily construct.

Another marked feature of early Muslim architecture was that the conquerors got their palaces mosques and mausoleums built from the material of Hindu and Jain temples which, in their religious frenzy, they pulled down. The very first mosque built at Delhi by Qutub-ud-dīn in 1197 was built by appropriating the material of twenty-seven 'idolatrous' temples, and was significantly called the 'Might of Islām' (Quwwat-ul-Islām). Even the *mihrāb*, a distinctive feature of Muslim architecture was, according to Havell, originally the temple niche of Hindu and Buddhist temples, from which the images of the deities had been removed. The use of material of destroyed temples in building

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mosques also led to Indian motifs being introduced in Muslim architecture, which therefore, is really a fusion of foreign and indigenous styles.

Muslim architecture reached its highest point of achievement during the rule of the Mughals. The chief monuments were erected by Akbar and Shahjāhān, while during Aurangzīb's reign there was a decline. This architecture was more definitely Mohammedan in character. Most of the buildings are to be found in the north-west part of India, particularly at Delhi, Āgrā, Lāhore, Fathehpur-Sikrī and Allahabad, and a few are at Bijāpur. The most remarkable of the early monuments are Sher Shāh's mosque at Delhi and his tomb, at Sahasram (Bengal), Humāyūn's tomb, Akbar's buildings in Fathepur Sikrī and his mausoleum at Sikandarā near Āgrā, Jahāngīr's Pearl Mosque at Lahore and Shāh Jahān's famous group of buildings including the renowned Taj Mahal.

In language and literature, the contribution of the medieval age is considerable. Not only were the traditional languages, Sanskrit and Hindī, developed, there were a number of meritorious writers in the Indian regional languages viz., Assamese, Bengālī, Kannaḍa Malayālam, Marāṭhi, Oṛiyā, Punjābi, Tamil and Telugu. Persian and Arabic came from across the border and found enthusiastic response among Hindus as well, particularly Kāyasthas and Kāshmirī Paṇḍits. The Muslim rulers were patrons of Arabic and Persian and some of them wrote poems themselves in these languages. Zeb-un-Nisā, the cultured and scholarly daughter of Aurangzīb wrote about a waterfall :

O waterfall, for whom do you mourn?
For whom do you cast down your head in grief ?
How grievous is your pain that all through the night.
Restless, like me, you strike your head against the stone,
And shed tears profusely !⁵

5 *Ai abshar nauha gar az bahr-i-kīstī.*
Sar dar nigūn figanda zi andoh-i-kīstī.
Āyā chī dard būd ki chūn mā tamām shab
Sar rā ba sang mī zadī o mī gīristī.

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The greatest gift of the Muslim conquest was Urdū, which was the language evolved from the mixture of Persian Arabic and Turkish words with Sanskrit. The most popular form of Urdū verse was the *ghazal*, a poem containing stray thoughts on love, beauty and morality. Another was the *marsiya* (elegy), as for example the one on the martyrdom of Imām Husain written by Anīs and Dabīr. Sauda, Mīr and Hasan were famous Urdū poets. Sauda wrote *ghazals* and *qasīdās* (panegyrics). Mīr was a master of lyrics and *ghazals*. The *mushāirā* (meeting of poets) was introduced by the Muslims and, along with the *kavi-sammelan* (assembly of Hindī poets), retains its popularity to this day.

The Mughals were lovers of natural beauty, as the observations of Bābur and Jahāngīr in their memoirs show. They laid out lovely and extensive gardens, like that of Shālamār in Kashmīr. Jahāngīr, with his inclination towards horticulture planted almond trees in the Badāmī Bāgh at Lāhore.

Several other ideals of administration and etiquette were introduced by the Muslims. Some of these, like the *pardah* were a retrograde step. This was adopted by Hindu women to protect their honour, and partly as an imitation of the Muslim custom. In manners and dress some new habits were introduced. The popular northern Indian dress of *achkan* and *churīdār pajāmā* as well as the *salwār* was adopted from the Muslims. Pastimes and games like huntings, hawking, *chaugān*, backgammon and and so forth were popularised. Sumptuous dinners became the fashion for those who could afford to give them. The Muslims ate well, and sometimes as many as a hundred dishes were served at table.

Many Muslim rulers were cultured and fond of books and learning. They had magnificent personal libraries. The Hindus were inclined to guard their books zealously, and seldom lent them out to others or reproduced copies for circulation. Not so the Muslims who believed that knowledge should be shared as much as possible. They built up huge public libraries as the Imperial Library, the biggest of them all. Akbar and Humāyūn had valuable books. Abdur Rahīm Khān-i-Khanān possessed a valuable library of his own. Shaikh Faizi had one containing 4,600 books. Sawāi Jai Singh's library had many books

on astronomy science and mathematics. Dārā Shukoh was a great lover of books and left behind a huge library.

Although India remained for centuries under Muslim rule, there was no marked difference in the lives of the majority of the people. The poorer classes of Hindus as well as Muslims were companions in wretchedness. They lived miserable lives far distant and removed from the grandeur of courts and the sumptuousness of the nobles. When the crops failed they starved and died. They had no recreations or pastimes. They sweated from dawn to dusk and lived their lives in squalor and want.

Some of the Muslim rulers did try to improve the conditions of the people they ruled. Firūz Tughluq kept prices down, built canals for irrigation, and prevented exactions by officials. Sher Shāh made revenue reforms, recognised the rights of the tenants, rationalised currency and tariff, improved communication and got the famous Grand Trunk Road made, which is even now one of the major highways. Akbar introduced a number of reforms. He abolished the hated *jizyā*, perfected the revenue system under the expert guidance of his minister and chief-*dīwān*, Todar Mal, pursued a tolerant religious policy and succeeded in winning the goodwill of his Hindu subjects. But here, too, as indeed in many other aspects of Muslim rule, there were great contrasts and inequalities. The majority of Muslim rulers had either no time for the common people or no interest in them. In contrast with this attitude there was the popular rule of the great Shivājī who welded the Marāthās into a united nation and ruled over them benevolently. As Ranade said of him 'he attracted towards himself all that was hopeful and inspiring in the land without distinction of class or caste or creed or colour.'

Despite the Muslim conquest and the influx of Islāmic ideas, the Hindu way of living hardly underwent any change. In fact there was a reaction towards conservatism. The caste system became more rigid, and outsiders were declared as *mlechhas* (untouchables). Hindu women went under the *purdah* to keep away from the foreigners. Scholars returned to their own culture with greater zeal. The *achkan* and *salwar*, though adopted for change and formality, failed to oust the simple

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dhōtī and the graceful *sārī*. Father Rudolf found even Akbar dressed in a Hindu *dhōtī* of the 'finest and most delicate silk falling to his heels and there gathered in by bangles covered with pearls.'⁶

A feature of Muslim rule which deserves mention is the institution of slavery. The Sultāns commonly maintained a large number of slaves, both men and women. Royal slaves were known as *bandagān-i-khās*. 'Alā-ud-dīn had 50,000 slaves, and under Firūz Tughluq their number swelled to 200,000. They were useful to their rulers and a source of gain, so they were well cared for. After some time a number of them were given back their freedom and managed to rise to high positions. Nevertheless the institution was a social evil. Many slaves, both men and women were sold to buyers in China, Turkestān and Persia.

Another characteristic feature was the large harems maintained by almost all Muslim emperors, as well as by their courtiers and nobles who were quick to imitate their masters. Akbar maintained 5,000 wives. Ahmed Shāh's seraglio was spread over an area of four square miles. Once he entered it he wouldn't come out for weeks together.

The Muslim rulers themselves were industrious and well meaning. Unfortunately they were too busy with conquests and in suppressing the numerous rebellions they had to face in their unwieldy empires, to make any serious efforts to consolidate their domains and to carry out schemes of public benefit in a sustained manner. As Flexner says: 'No nation is rich enough to pay for both war and civilisation.'⁷

This volume on the culture and civilisation of the medieval period is the third in the series of the *A History of Indian Civilisation*, planned in five volumes. The first deals with Ancient India, the second with the political history of the medieval period (1000 to 1800). These two books have already been published. Volumes four and five will cover the modern period of Indian history comprising of India under the British rule and Independence and after. This five volume series is planned

6 *First Christian Mission to the Great Mogul*, p. 62.

7 Abraham Flexner, *Universities*, 1930,

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to give a complete perspective of Indian history, culture and civilisation from an independent and impartial point of view. It is hoped it will be of assistance to graduate and post-graduate students and also provide interesting reading to those who wish to know more about India's glorious past. I am grateful to my publisher for bringing out the volumes in a very attractive format and in the shortest possible time.

Lucknow
1980

K.P. Bahadur

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PART TWO
Culture & Civilisation

Political Theory and Administrative Institutions*

(A) POLITICAL THEORY

The basis of Muslim polity is the *Qurān*. The directives of the *Qurān* are mainly solidarity and unity of all Muslims and consultation for administering affairs of the community. Thus the Prophet was the teacher and head of a state. He consulted his disciples and appointed trusted Muslims to decide problems, like law points and settlements of disputes, in accordance with Islāmic law.

The Prophet died without nominating any successor or leaving any rules for future guidance. The people, therefore, chose for themselves a leader. The choice fell on Abū Bakr. An ecclesiastical head became a necessity, and the tradition of a *Khalifāh* who combined in himself both religious and political functions came into being. The *Khalifāh* or caliph cannot bear analogy with the English pope for there is difference between the two. The pope is head of a church, not so the caliph. Islām has no church or priesthood. The religious and the temporal do not have that sharp division in it as in Christianity. The caliph is

*Note:—The general order followed throughout is to give the organisation of the Sultānate first and then of the Mughal empire. That of Hindu empires is given under separate headings.

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not just a religious head. He is head of the Muslim community and its chief executive.

The *Qurān* laid down broad principles which required interpretation in being applied to daily living. The truest interpretation was of course that made by the Prophet. After him various divines continued to interpret the dictates of the *Qurān* and their conclusions got the name *shar*.¹ 'The *shar* had behind it supreme authority. Even the caliph was bound by it. He could pass executive decrees, but not contrary to anything contained in the *shar*'. Muslims considered it to be the duty of the community, and through it of the state, to enforce the law of the *shar*'. This explains the eagerness of Muslim monarchs to enforce the law of *shar*', which by its being based on the *Qurān* was believed to have a divine origin.

The caliph was next only to the *shar*'. His prestige was unquestioned. No Muslim monarch of the Sultānate, however powerful, could consider himself to be lawfully enthroned unless he had the caliph's sanction. His job was to defend the frontiers of the territory of Islām, maintain peace and order, ensure the people's happiness and decide disputes. Every Muslim had to obey him. But not against the *shar*'. Abū Bakr, the first caliph was unanimously elected. Election became the mode of appointment though the qualifications required for the post, and the procedure, remained indefinite.

Fear of anarchy led Muslim politicians to give importance to monarchy. So much so that a good monarch would be rewarded by finding a place under the banner of the Prophet on the Day of Reckoning. Bad monarchs would be called to account. Later writers insisted that the king was the viceregent of God and His shadow on earth. Humāyūn's court historian, Khwandmir, designates him as Hazrat Pādshāh Zill-i-Ilāhī or 'His Majesty the king, shadow of God'. Jahāngir and Shāh Jahān believed that kingship was a divine gift. Akbar, too, assumed the title Imām-i-Ādil. This concept was, however, quite different from that of the divine right of kings which emerged in England. The Mughal emperors had no such divine protection. Royal princes like Salīm and Khurram rebelled

1 also sometimes called *sharI'at*.

against their fathers. There were fierce wars of succession. Yet the emperor got no benefit by the glory which was attached to him as God's representative. Only the sword helped him to retain his throne. Besides, although the king had the power to decide matters in conformity with the *Qurān* and the *shar'*, they took advice on law and administration from the *'ulamā* and the *sadr-us-sudūr*. The *'ulamās* were learned men who had specialised in the Islāmic law and religion and the *sadr-us-sudūr* was the head of the judicial and religious administration. In practice the *sadr-us-sudūr* held his office at the king's pleasure. Akbar dismissed with the services of 'Abd-u'n-Nabī for refusing to sign his Infallibility Decree. Aurangzīb's *sadr-us-sudūr* had to go because he would not legalise his accession during the life time of Shāh Jahān. 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī and Tughluq tried to ignore the advice of the *'ulamās*. Despite the absence of an organised priesthood, the Muslim state was a theocracy. But in practice the king had a lot of freedom provided he did not transgress the injunctions of the *Qurān*. Akbar, and after him Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān introduced new laws to supplement those of Islām. Muhammad Tughluq indeed got Muslim divines executed when they rebelled against his religious policy. He tried to separate religion from politics, which in Islām were bound closely together.

In truth the Delhi Sultāns were independent rulers and their allegiance to the caliph was nominal. It was only the sword which could give and maintain kingship. This being so, when the Mughal emperors repudiated the caliph's authority and considered themselves to be virtual caliphs within their own realm, the transition was smooth. Neither the caliph nor the emperor's own subjects questioned the move.

It is difficult to say whether the Islāmic state was just a police state or cared also for the welfare of its subjects. Consideration of this point raises many vexed issues on which opinion remains divided. According to Muslim canon law Muslims alone were the rightful members of an Islāmic state. Others were divided into two classes. The Jews, Christians and so forth were known as 'people of scriptures' (*zimmīs*). Their life and property was guaranteed after they had paid the *jizyā* and the *kharāj* (land tax). Idol worshippers however, had no

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place in the state. If they did not accept Islām they were to be killed. In practice it was not possible to slay the idolators because it was they who formed the vast majority of subjects. In the beginning Muslim kings tried to follow strictly the dictates of Islām and massacred the infidels (as they called the idol worshippers) in large numbers. Few, they found, would accept Islām. But the task was beyond them. If they killed all their subjects, over whom would they rule ? As a compromise they extended the concession of *jizyā* to them also. Moreover the Sultāns and emperors found it prudent not to interfere with the personal law of any of the races they ruled over. All except Shāh Jahān, refrained from doing so.² Most Muslim monarchs were too busy in wars to be able to do much for the people's welfare. Even when they could, the welfare schemes were confined to Muslims, who formed only a small part of the population. The motive for these schemes was religious merit. For example when *madarsās* (schools) were built they were exclusively for Muslims.³ When stipends were given for education, or poor women helped with money for their marriages, it was always Muslims who got the assistance. The rulers who included all the people in steps taken for their benefit, were few, like 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, Akbar, Jahāngīr and possibly Shāh Jahān. 'Alā-ud-dīn tried to check prostitution and prohibit gambling. Sher Shāh built roads and *sarāis* and planted trees. Akbar went much further and considered the welfare of all people, irrespective of caste or creed, as his primary concern. Whether it was Hindu society or Muslim, he purged it of evils. He forbade *sati*, excessive drinking and so forth. Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān continued this liberal policy to some extent. Other rulers, however cared only for realisation of revenue to finance their wars. If their thoughts ever went to the people it was to those of their own faith. The Muslim state was neither a welfare state nor a police state. It was not the former for the welfare schemes were aimed, by and large, for the small minority. It wasn't a police state because the law was supreme.

2 This he did to ensure that a convert from Hinduism to Islām did not lose his share of the family estate.

3 Such *madarsās* were built by 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī and Firūz Tugluq.

In case of crime there was punishment for the criminal and compensation for the victim. The nature of officialdom varied from ruler to ruler. Some of the emperors punished erring officers sternly, like Shāh Jahān, who it is said got them bitten to death by poisonous snakes. But with weak rulers in the declining years of the Sultānate and in the age of the Mughal emperors after Aurangzīb, things were much different. The officers were corrupt and rapacious, and had no care for the central authority.

It must not be supposed, however that the Islāmic state was completely despotic. Apart from the spiritual check of Islāmic theocracy, according to which the kings were constrained to act according to the *Qurān* and the *shar'*, there was the temporal one of the nobles. They were a power to be reckoned with. No ruler dare annoy them. They often decided the succession. Indeed sometimes they were the real rulers, and the king their protege. Another check was the fear of rebellion. No principle of hereditary succession existed and there were innumerable wars of succession and intrigues when a ruler died. The Muslim state must, therefore, be considered a kind of limited despotism.

(B) THE COURT

There were two main things which counted for a medieval monarch, power and prestige. The one depended on the strength and efficiency of the Imperial army, the other on the grandeur of his court. The court's splendour made the people realise the king's greatness and majesty. In later years it dazzled eyes of the numerous ambassadors, plenipotentiaries and foreign visitors who came to the Mughal court. Even the puritanic Aurangzīb maintained a grand court, as noted by Bernier.

The Sultāns of Delhi maintained not only splendid courts but also moved in grand processions to impress their subjects and dazzle them with their majesty. Anyone aggrieved could petition the emperor while on the move. He held up the written petition and cried aloud for the Sultān's protection. Complaints and petitions were also received in the public *darbar* where the Sultān sat in audience. The greater nobles, officers of the State

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and of the secretariate, put up matters for orders in private audiences. Secret matters were discussed in the council chamber which was a kind of cabinet room. Only those officers were admitted there whose advice was actually required.

The Mughal emperors continued the system of hearing grievances in court and of holding audiences, making it indeed more elaborate. The emperors gave a general audience in the *jharokah-i-darshan* and transacted business in the *dīwān-i-‘ām*, the *dīwān-i-khās* and the *Shāh Burj*. The *jharokah-i-darshan* was the emperor's appearance on the balcony from where the people could see him. Akbar started it. Anyone in the audience who had a grievance would raise his hand, and the royal official took his petition and led him to the emperor afterwards when he sat in the *durbār*. It was a salutary practice for it gave a chance for all the people, irrespective of importance or rank, to be heard. Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān continued it, but it was stopped by Aurangzīb because he thought it meant the worship of a man. The *dīwān-i-‘ām* (its extended name was *dawlat-khānah-i-‘ām wa khās*) was the hall of public audience. The emperor did a lot of work of varied nature here. Princes, high officers, *mansabdārs*, foreign visitors and so forth were received here by the emperor who sat on a raised throne. Petitions were read and orders passed. Reports about administration were submitted. Musketeers mounted guard and were reviewed. Beasts of the Imperial stables were brought for inspection.

The *dīwān-i-khās* (also called *dawlat-i-khānah-i-khās*) was meant exclusively for the highest officers. Akbar was in the habit of receiving officers after his bath. In his time the apartment contained the Imperial bath also and was known as the *ghuslkānah*. The *dīwān-i-khās* was reserved for work which needed the emperor's close attention. Important communications were drafted and signed here. Newswriters gave their confidential reports on the provincial governors. Architects showed him plans of new buildings. Craftsman, who had anything of interest displayed it to him. The *Shāh Burj* had even more restricted entry. Only royal princes and the very topmost officers could get in. Secret matters were discussed here. The emperor had a separate chamber for lighter pursuits, known as

the *khalwat-kadah-i-khās*. Here he met men of culture and learning, religious leaders and mystics, philosophers, historians, musicians and poets. He would be entertained with music or poems recited by poets.

Most of the Mughal kings and those of the Sultānate, worked hard, almost from day-break to midnight. The emperor would rise early before dawn and after congregational prayers go to the balcony for the *gharokah-i-darshan*. Then, one after the other, he went to the *dīwān-i-‘ām*, the *dīwān-i-khās* and the *Shāh Burj*. At noon he went to his private apartments for luncheon with the empress and other ladies of the court. Here he made suitable grants to deserving women whom the empress recommended. A short siesta followed, and then the afternoon prayers. He was back again to the *dīwān-i-‘ām* to inspect the guard and to finish off any work left over. After sunset prayers the emperor was at the *dīwān-i-khās* to transact official business. This over there was work in the *Shah Burj*. By this time it was midnight, and the emperor retired to the royal bedchamber.

(C) THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD

The diversity of work with the emperor necessitated a number of officials. Muslim emperors had large establishments in order to maintain their dignity and majesty. Apart from the ushers, heralds, palace guards and personal attendants, there were those who looked after the harem, which with some of them, assumed large proportions. In the Sultānate period these officials were controlled by the *wakīl-i-dar*. He looked after the pay and allowances of the Sultān's personal staff. Equally important was the *amīr-i-hājib* (also known as *bārbak*). He was the master of ceremonies. No one could enter the king's presence without being introduced by him or his assistant (*hājib*). The king's commissariat had thirty-six departments known as *kārkhānahs* which, as the name implies, were factories to manufacture articles for the court's use. Weavers and workers in gold brocade made cloth for the king's household and robes of honours which he gave frequently. Arms and fighting equipment were also manufactured by them for the army. Royal stables maintained

and bred horses for the army as well as for the Sultān and his household.

The rulers of the Sultānate had kept the organisation of their household separate. Humāyūn had an officer similar to the *wakīl-i-dar* who was known as the *wakīl-i-dar-i-khānah*. But this fell into disuse early. Subsequent Mughal emperors had no such distinction. Government officials were assigned household duties also. For example the *wakīl* who was lord lieutenant of the realm was also head of the Imperial household. A number of officials looked after the king and his family. The *wazīr* was in charge of the finances and so played an important part. The *mīr sāmān* was a kind of estate officer and was in charge of all the government property. Other minor officials were as follows:

- mīr māl*— the emperor's private treasurer
- muhrdār*— keeper of the royal seals
- bārbegī*— controller of audiences
- qūrbegī*— keeper of the royal arms and insignia
- mīr tuzūk*— master of ceremonies
- mīr manzil*—quartermaster of the court
- khwānsālār*—incharge of the kitchen and the table
- qūshbegī*— incharge of the aviaries
- ākhtahbegī*—keeper of the royal stables

Of these the job of the *mīr manzil* was not only important but also arduous, for the emperors were often on the move. Armies lived in tents which were so great in numbers that they were really like moving cities. In many cases they had to be pitched overnight. The job of the keeper of the royal stables, too, was an onerous one.

The palace was divided into three sections. The outmost was accessible to all those who had any work there. The next was for more exclusive audiences. A little further there was the harem. This consisted of the queens, the emperor's female relations and other ladies. It was a huge organisation consisting of several palaces and pavilions in which the women lived according to their rank. They were given allowances in cash or in the form of assignments. These payments were controlled by

a finance officer. Under him there were superintendents, all women. Armed women and eunuchs guarded the harem. An important officer of the household was the *mīr 'arḍ*. All petitions addressed to the emperor passed through him. All orders issuing directly from the palace were communicated by him to the commander of the guards for being served on the parties concerned.

Frequent wars and the charm of outdoor life caused the Muslim monarchs to undertake an extraordinary amount of travelling. An army of men were employed in making arrangements for the royal household while touring. The camps were elaborate and appeared like a moving city. There were two sets. When the court moved to one place the tents equipment and furniture move two stages ahead. Thus when the emperor and his household moved ahead, ready made tents awaited them. For each of these two camps were employed a thousand *farrāshes*, five hundred porters, one hundred water carriers, fifty carpenters thirty leather workers, one hundred sweepers, tent makers and torch bearers.

The *kārkhānās* continued during the Mughal period. At the head there was the *dārogah* (superintendent), assisted by clerks and accountants. The entire organisation was under the general supervision of the *dīwān*. The treasury, mint and artillery were attached to the household. The Imperial workshops set the standard of production, and their goods were of the highest quality. The standards reached in gold and silver work, textiles, carpets papiermachè and ivory work were never surpassed. The *kārkhānās* also provided employment to a large number of workers and made them experts in their trades.

Strict etiquette was observed in the courts of Muslim monarchs. Everyone had to stand. Permission was given occasionally for royal princes to sit. People who were admitted to private audiences had to prostrate themselves. Later on in Shāh Jahān's time this was modified into the form of salutation in which the visitor placed the palms of his hands on the ground and kissed the back of them. Humāyūn started the *taslīm* and the *kornish*. In the former the back of the right hand was placed on the ground and then raised slowly till the palm touched the forehead. The *kornish* form was easier. It consisted

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of putting the palm of the right hand on the forehead and then bending down the head.

The king's orders were issued through *farmāns* which were carefully and exhaustively drafted. These were marked by seals of which there were five kinds, each having a specific import. One was for titles, high appointments, *jāgīrs* and sanctions of large amounts. Another for letters to foreign kings. The third seal was for judicial transactions. The fourth for matters connected with departments of the palace. The fifth was for all other matters. The *uzuk* seal which was the most important was often kept with the empress. The king's *farmans* were to be respectfully received. Sikandar Lodī insisted that when the royal messengers bearing his *farmān* went to his governor the latter should meet them at a distance of two or three miles from the city, place it on his head and so carry it to the mosque to be read out from the pulpit, if it was meant to be announced. Often the queen-mother or the royal consort also issued orders of importance. Nūr Jahān took an active part in state matters and even interfered in administration. The ladies of the court played a prominent part in reconciling Akbar and Salīm. Jahānārā intrigued in favour of Dārā Shukoh. The edicts of the queen-mother were known as *hukms*. Those of a princess or a prince's consort were *nishāns*. The *hukms* ranked only next to the king's *farmān* while *nishāns* were a little inferior in authority.

(D) THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

(1) In the Sultanate

Next to the Sultān the chief executive officer was the *wazīr*. The central finance was his immediate concern but he had supervisory authority over all other departments as well. He acted for the emperor during his absence. All provincial governors had to submit their accounts to him. As head of the *kārkhānahs* he was responsible for equipping the army. Collection of revenue, control of expenditure, recovery of money illegally spent by officers, disbursement of salaries, sanction of stipends to deserving scholars and men of learning and distribution of doles to the

poor and needy were all within his province. The *Ādab-ul-Mulūk* says: 'No branch of public administration was outside his purview, and every subject from the mightiest governor to the lowliest peasant had dealings with him or his assistants.' The *wazīr* was assisted by a *nā'ib wazīr*. Next to the *wazīr* was the *mushrif-i-mumālīk*, the accountant-general. The *mustaufī-i-mumālīk* was the Sultānate's auditor-general. Initially there seems to be some duplication of work because accounts were sent both to the *mushrif* as well as to the *mustaufī*. Firūz, therefore, redistributed the accounts work so that the *mushrif* dealt with income and the *mustaufī* with expenditure. After Iltutmish the *wazīr* lost much of his importance, and became almost a departmental head.

The *wazīr's* ministry was known as the *dīwān-i-wizārat*; and this along with three others, the *dīwān-i-risālat* (the ministry of religious affairs), the *dīwān-i-arz* (ministry of defence), and the *dīwān-i-inshā* (ministry of correspondence), were considered to be the four pillars of the Sultānate. The *dīwān-i-risālat* is believed by some to be a kind of foreign office engaged in diplomatic correspondence. Others take it to be a ministry of appeals, receiving complaints from the public and redressing them on behalf of the king. Another view is that it dealt with religious matters, pious foundations, and stipends to deserving writers and scholars.⁴ Perhaps it was a composite ministry, for it was quite usual for several functions to be combined in one officer. The *sadr-us-sudūr* presided over this ministry. He was also the *qāzi-i-mumālīk*, in which capacity he controlled the department of justice. The ministry of the army or defence was controlled by the '*āriz-i-mumālīk* who was the controller—general of the military department. He maintained the descriptive rolls of men and horses, enlisted recruits and fixed their pay. The '*āriz* also inspected the armed forces. The ministry of correspondence was under the *dabīr-i-khās* and he had a large number of clerks (*dabīrs*) under him. All correspondence

4 These are the respectively in Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (p. 198), Chopra, Puri and Das *A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India* Macmillan (vol. 2, p. 9) and Bhavan's, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, vol. VI, p. 449.

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between the Sultān and rulers of other states or tributaries passed through him. There was also a news agency run by the state under a minister designated as the *barīd-i-mumālīk*. It was his job to keep himself informed of all that happened in the empire. The headquarters of each sub-division of the king's domain had a news writer who sent confidential reports to the king. This acted as a check on oppression and ensured obedience on the part of provincial governors and the bureaucracy. The ministers were servants of the crown and they held their appointment at the Sultān's pleasure. As experts in their departments their advice had value and earned them esteem in his eyes. But that was all. When they fell from favour they were instantly removed.

The main source of income for the state was agricultural revenue. This was assessed by sharing, appraisalment or measurement. The demand was a fifth of the gross produce which was raised to a half under 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī. After his death it again became a fifth. Bābur raised the demand to a fourth, Akbar made it a third. *Jizyā* was another source of income. This tax was levied on Hindus varying according to the individual's wealth, usually varying from ten to forty *tankās* per annum. Certain categories like cultivators and the disabled did not pay. The other sources of income were the import duties ranging from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 per cent, spoils of war and imposts on mines and treasure-troves, the rate being twenty per cent. Muslims paid a poor tax called *zakāt*. Sometimes payments of salaries to officers were made by giving them assignment of revenue. But no permanent rights were given in the land so assigned.

Apart from the main ministries enumerated above other minor departments were: (1) The department of buildings, in charge of the *mīr-i-amārat* (2) The department of agriculture under the *amir-i-koh* (3) The department of punishments known as the *siyāsat*, which was created by Muhammad bin Tughluq (4) The department of *khairāt* (charity). This was started by Firūz Tughluq for helping poor Muslims, particularly to help them to marry their daughters.

The capital of the empire, Delhi, was administered by a *kotwāl* who had judicial as well as police duties, somewhat

like the modern police commissioner. He was responsible for law and order. In case of crime he had to trace out the culprit and put him up before the court. 'Alā-ud-dīn created the post of the *dīwān-i-riyāsat* to keep vigilance over tradesmen. He controlled the markets and inspected weights and measures. Another officer was the *muhtāsib* who kept a record of the general conduct of the people and looked after their morals.

(2) Under the Mughals

The Mughal emperors were reluctant to part with power, but it was also not possible to rule such a vast empire without the assistance of capable officers. Bābur was all the time busy with wars and had little time for consolidation. Even then he had a prime-minister (Mahdī Khvāja) and a *sadr* (Zain-ud-dīn). Humāyūn's reign was full of turmoil and for quite a bit of time he remained a fugitive in exile. It was left to Akbar to work out an administrative system, which was adopted with minor variations by succeeding rulers. He had experienced the overbearing attitude of Bairam Khān and others, and so was wary of concentrating power in any single person. He did not have any cabinet of ministers. The officers under him were rather heads of departments, and the emperor consulted any of them he liked. They had no right to tender advice. They were only high dignitaries and servants of the state. Each one was responsible to the monarch alone. The Mughal emperors believed in a policy of checks and balances. This again was aimed at preventing any one officer from usurping power. It was on this principle that two top officers were appointed, one designated *wakīl* and the other the *wazīr* or *dīwān*. Though sometimes the two offices were combined, this was rare. In theory the *dīwān* was subordinate to the *wakīl*. In truth he was independent. The *wakīl* was the emperor's lieutenant in all matters connected with the household. In this capacity he was his chief adviser. He advised him in appointments, dismissals, promotions and demotions. He received statements of expenditure from the heads of all financial departments and kept abstracts of their returns. The *wazīr* was the head of the fiscal administration. He was a wizard in finance. Being the king's

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foremost officer he was a link between him and the people. Al-Fakhri says of him: 'The *wazir* is one who is intermediate between the king and his subjects, so there must needs be in his nature one aspect which accords with the nature of kings and another aspect which accords with the nature of the common folk, so that he may deal with both classes in such a manner as to secure of himself their acceptance and affection'. The *wazir* called the highest officers of the realm to render accounts and had to be strict with those who misappropriated money. He kept strict control over the provincial *dīwāns*. The Imperial treasuries were also under him. The *wazir* was assisted by three high officials, namely the *dīwān-i-khālisāh*, the *dīwān-i-tan* (also known as the *sahib-i-tawjīh*) and the *mustaufi*. The principle of checks and balances worked here too. Mughal emperors would sometimes appoint an officer intermediate between the *wakil* and the *dīwān*, known as *ishraf-i-dīwān* or *mushrif-i-dīwān*. Moreover the three officers who were to assist the *wazir* had independent charge of their respective departments, even though seemingly they were his subordinates. They were directly responsible to the emperor. Of them the *dīwān-i-khālisāh* was in charge of all the land given out in assignment. This land, called *khālisāh*, was not like the crown land of our own times. The same land could be *khālisāh* at one time and an assignment at another. The *dīwān-i-khālisāh* administered all such land and ensured that its revenue went into the treasury. The *dīwān-i-tan* regulated *jāgīrs*. When payment of the king's officers was made by assigning *jāgīrs* to them, he got its limits demarcated in such a manner that it would yield the salary allowed to the officer concerned and not exceed the required limit.

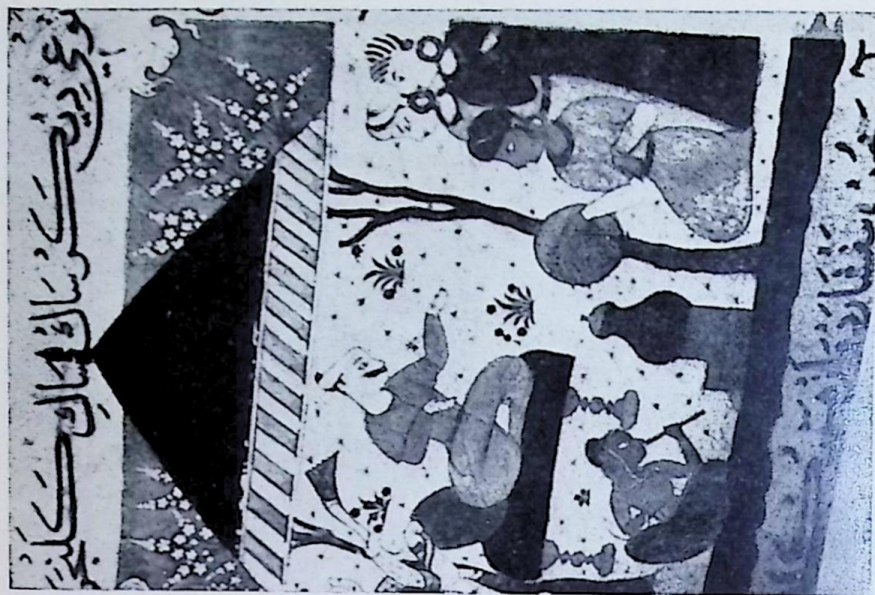
Akbar, later on, abolished the post of the all powerful *wazir* and redistributed his powers and functions among four ministers viz., the *dīwān*, the *mīr bakhshī*, the *mīr sāmān* and the *sadr*. The *dīwān* was the finance minister or more correctly the head of the revenue and finance departments. He was the emperor's chief executive officer and head of the central administration. He controlled the provincial governors and as head of the empire's finances he regulated all expenditure and made sure the revenues due were being collected and deposited in the



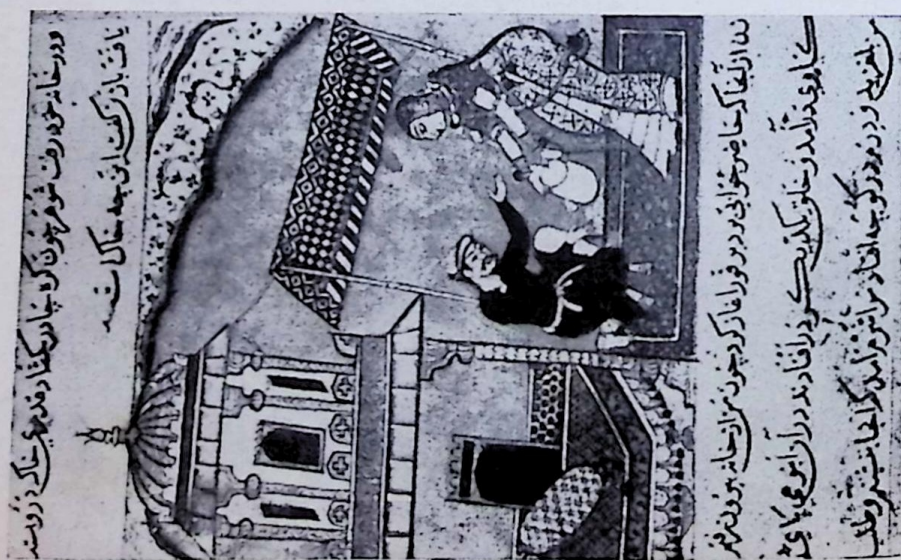
Bijapur Painting



Bijapur Painting



Mughal Painting



Mughal Painting

Imperial treasury. Postings and transfers of important officers like the *faūjdārs sūbahdārs* and so forth, were his domain. The *dīwān-i-khālīsāh*, *dīwān-i-tan*, *mushrif* (accountant) and *mustaufī* (auditor) were all under him. In a way, therefore he replaced the *wazīr* as the topmost officer.

The *mīr bakhshī* was one of the more powerful officers of the Mughal administration. Appointment orders of high ranking officers like the *mansabdārs*, and those of the *wikālat*, *wizārat* and *sadārat* passed through him. He supervised the branding of horses, inspected soldiers to see that *mansabdārs* were maintaining the number they should, and fixed salaries on their basis. He was thus the head of the military department. His importance can be seen from the fact that he always stood on the right side of the throne, remained throughout meetings held by the emperor in the private chamber (the *dīwān-i-khās*), and on important and urgent occasions in the *Shāh Burj*. As head of the military he allotted the days on which each of the *mansabdārs* would mount guard at the palace. He received news-reports from the provinces and put them up before the king. This again made him dreaded by the provincial governors. During the emperor's tours, pleasure trips and hunting expeditions, he always accompanied him, and along with the *mīr sāmān* who was head of the *kārkhānahs*, supervised the arrangement of the camp, regulated the attendance of *mansabdārs* in the royal presence and ensured the convenience of the troops and their conveyance. The *mīr bakhshī* had an important role on the battlefield. If the emperor himself led the army he accompanied him and looked after the arrangements. He could be placed in charge of one division of the army or made in complete charge of the campaign. In this capacity he had the task of a commander or a general. Or he could be deputed to go with a prince or high *amīr* if the expedition was an important one. He could also take active part in the fighting just like any other military general. It must not be supposed, however, that the *mīr bakhshī* was some kind of commander-in-chief or had any prominent role of a similar kind. It was not necessary that he should be called to lead the army or an army division. If the king desired he did, otherwise not. The task was not by virtue of the post. But the fact that he could be

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called upon to take part in a battle made it essential that he should have military qualifications. Nor should it be supposed that the *mīr bakshīs* had purely outdoor duties. Along with the *bakshīs* under him, generally three, he maintained a regular office like other civil officers. A number of certificates were issued under his seal and signature. Important records were kept and reports prepared. Military accounts, establishment of *mansabdārs* and information about them, orders about *amīrs* and *dārogahs* and a record of appointments made in the Imperial court, were some of the papers kept by his office. Only a really talented man could, thus, be a candidate for this coveted post—one who could combine himself the excellence of a hard working administrator and the courage, skill, and fitness of an intrepid general.

The *mīr sāmān* (also known as *khān sāmān*), was the minister in charge of the king's household, royal buildings, roads, gardens, stores *kārkhānahs* (or *buyūtāt*s) and purchases. The function of the *kārkhānah* has already been mentioned. 'It dealt with every article, from pearls, precious stones, swords and scimitars, to guns and heavy artillery. It maintained horses and elephants for the army, beasts of burden for baggage, and other animals for the royal hunt'.⁵ The *mīr sāmān* looked after the *kārkhānahs* jointly with the *dīwān*. Though their powers were clearly defined, they acted in close co-operation. As the minister-in-charge of the royal household the *mīr sāmān* was responsible for meeting all its requirements. He made all necessary arrangements for the emperor's expeditions. When *mansabdārs*, ambassadors, generals, literary men and the like, had to be given gifts, the *mīr sāmān* selected and arranged for them. All purchases were made through him. He got inventories made of the property and assets of nobles who died. In his work he was assisted by a number of officers under his supervision. These were the *dīwān-i-butūtāt*, *mushrif-i-kul ojuz* ('accountant of the part and the whole'), *dārogah*, *tahsildār*, *mustaufi* (accountant), *darogāh-i-kachhehrī* and *nāzir*. The financial side was looked after by the *dīwān-i-butūtāt*. The

⁵ Hasan, *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1936, p. 235.

mushrif-i-kul ojuz was the head accountant having a *mushrif* in each branch of his department. Each branch of the *kārkhānah* was headed by a *dārogah* under whom artisans worked. Each *kārkhānah* had also a *tahsildār*, who was in charge of the cash and material. The *mustaufi* was the auditor of the *kārkhānah* accounts. He verified the expenditure from the vouchers and had his report signed by the *dīwān* and accepted by the *mīr sāmān*. The *dārogah-i-kachhehrī* was the officer who maintained general supervision in the office. He looked after the registers, exercised supervision over the clerks and peons, opened and locked the office and so forth. The *nāzir* was meant to assist the *dīwān* and worked under him. He was concerned more with the accounts side than with any executive work.

The *sadr* was the religious head in the Muslim state. According to Muslim jurists the protection of the *sharī'at* (Islamic law) was the king's fundamental duty. In order to protect the *sharī'at* it was necessary firstly to have scholars who studied it and an adviser in such matters from among these scholars. In the Sultānate the adviser was known as the chief or *shaikh* of Islām or *shaikh-ul-Islām*. The king would summon learned men on the subject, known as '*ulamās*'. These were also known as *sudūr*. The chief of them was called *sadr* (meaning 'chief'). This is how, in Mughal times, the office of *sadr-us-sudūr* (or *sadr-ul-sudūr*) originated. The king was to respect the *sadr* and consult him in all matters of law and religion. All civil and military officers were expected to carry out his orders without hesitation or questioning. The *sadr's* position was high. His job was to keep a watch over the '*ulamās*', take all steps to make the Muslim subjects good Mussalmāns and grant stipends to suitable scholars of the Islamic faith so that they could be relieved from the anxiety of earning a living and devote all their time freely to such scholarship. He exercised a censorship over education, ideas and morals and so exercised wide power and influence.

Some of the *sadrs* like Shaikh Gadāī, misused their vast powers. The Shaikh, as Badāūnī says, annexed the lands held by old families and awarded them to those who could stoop to flatter him and attend upon him, while people of worth and

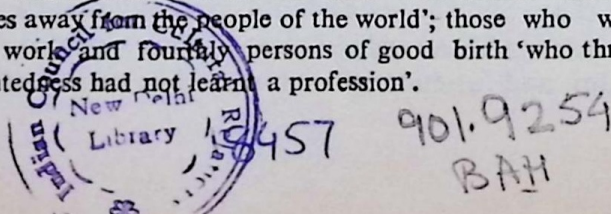
good families had to suffer all sorts of insults.' Akbar therefore curtailed the *sadr*'s power of making grants of lands, restricting it to as little as fifteen *bighās* only. With his broad secular vision Akbar also widened the scope of the recipients to include people of all creeds, not Muslims alone. The nature of the qualifications required for the *sadr* were also modified. The 'Ain-i-Akbarī says 'As the circumstances of the men have to be inquired into before grants are made, and their petitions must be considered in fairness, an experienced man of correct intentions is employed for this office. He ought to be at peace with every party and must be kind towards the people at large in word and action. Such an officer is called *sadr*.'⁶ Thus the *sadr* was to be honest, experienced and efficient. Learning and piety were no longer insisted upon. He was to inquire into the conditions of the persons to whom awards were to be given and put up their cases to the king, not grant the awards himself. Separate *sadrs* having the same basic qualifications were appointed in the provinces as well. This also curbed the *sadr*'s authority. The later Mughal emperors from Jahāngīr to Aurangzib continued this system. Shāh Jāhan allowed the *sadr* to make small grants. Soldiers and artisans could not, however, get it.⁷

Akbar distributed cash to the poor both in court and outside it. Though his successors did not continue this practice, they lodged and fed poor travellers in *sarāīs*, as Akbar had done. Free cooked food was also distributed. The benefits of charity were not lasting as they were not organised on a systematic basis. They did, however, save people from dying of starvation.

The *sadr-ul-sudūr* was also the chief judge of the empire in this capacity he was known as *qāzī-ul-quzat* and held his own court. He recommended appointment of judicial officers and

6 Abu-'I-Fazl, 'Ain-i-Akbarī, Trans., page 198, lines 8-10 (Asiatic Society of Bengal)

7 There were four kinds of persons entitled to awards—the learned religious 'who had declared war on their own desires and had turned their faces away from the people of the world'; those who were incapable of work and fourthly persons of good birth 'who through their shortsightedness had not learnt a profession'.



supervised the working of the department. Under Akbar and Aurangzib the two offices were separate. The *sadr* was assisted by the *dīwān-i- sa'ādat* and some clerks.

The *muhtāsib* was another officer having both religious and secular duties. He examined weights and measures, controlled prices, recovered debts and traced and handed over fugitive slaves to their owners. It was his job to prevent encroachment on public streets or in markets. Aurangzib, with his puritanic zeal and religious intolerance, used the *muhtāsib* for preventing the use and sale of intoxicants, eradicating prostitution, and enforcing his punitive laws against the Hindus, like the suppression of idol worship, *jizyā*, prohibition of Hindu festivals and so forth. The *muhtāsib* ensured that music was not played, lamps were not lighted on tombs of Muslims, and toys representing animate beings were not sold. A watch was kept on all Muslims to see that they attended the regular prayers and fasted during Ramzān. Even the lengths of beards and kind of clothes to be worn were regulated by the *muhtāsibs*.

The *dārogah-i-dāk chaukī* managed the Imperial post. His messengers went everywhere on horseback to bring and convey news.

(E) THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

(1) In the Sultanate

The units of administration were as follows:

- (a) The province was in charge of the governor known as a *nāib*, *walī* or *muqtī*. Provinces were further divided into districts (*shiqqs*) each under a *shiqqdār*.
- (b) Feudatory states—these were vassals of the Sultānate, and their rulers were much more independent.
- (c) Khalsā or centrally governed territories. These included districts, forts and cities. They were in charge of superintendents (*amīrs* or *shahnahs*) appointed by the Sultān.

22 A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION : II/II

The provinces were the most important units of the empire. The governors were appointed by the Sultān and dismissed by him. He was a kind of intermediary whose main tasks were (1) Collection of land revenue. After deducting the expenses of the administration and the army the surplus was to be sent to the centre. Accounts were rendered to the *diwān-i-wizārat*. (2) Maintenance of troops. He had to maintain both cavalry and infantry of strength to the Sultān's satisfaction. Later Sultāns would specify their demands. Balban instructed Bughrā Khān the governor of Sāmāna and Sunām to double his troops and raise their pay. The governor was expected to keep himself informed about all details about his army. Balban's advice was 'Consider no expense for the army too much, and let your master-muster (*'āriz*) engage himself always in maintaining the old troops and recruiting new ones. Insist on his informing you of every expenditure in the department.' He was expected to join the royal forces with his contingents whenever required to do so. If he didn't it was considered an act of rebellion. Every governor was liable for military service. (3) The governor was responsible for the defence of the province from external aggression, as well as maintenance of law and order. (4) As head of the judiciary in the province, he presided over the higher provincial courts, and himself decided important cases.

The governor's salary consisted of a fixed share of the provincial revenue. He was strictly enjoined not to appropriate more than his share. The *diwān-i-wizārat* ensured this. To his newly appointed officers Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq said, 'If you desire that you may not be taken to task by the *diwān-i-wizārat* you should not be avaricious; take little from the *iqta* (revenues) and with this defray your expenses and pay your troops. Do not take a single pice from the pay of the troops.' Ziya-ud-dīn Barnī records 'governors who embezzle the money and tamper with the accounts and exact more than the specified share out of the *iqta* would be punished by chains and imprisonment'.

Generally the governors lived in the provinces of their jurisdiction, but occasionally when their presence was constantly required at the capital because of their holding some other important office there also, they ruled through deputies (*nāibs*). The choice

of *nāib* was often made by the centre in such cases. In larger provinces the governor himself appointed his deputy in important cities and outposts.

The governors were powerful in their jurisdiction and not merely paid bureaucrats. They could assign lands to their officers and, like the king, free land grants. They ran almost parallel empires in their provinces. But they were answerable fully to the Sultān. The *khutba* had to be read in the provinces in the king's name. Appeals against the local courts or against the governor could be made to the Sultān. They could be transferred from a bigger to a smaller charge, and in any case they were moved after every three or four years. The central government got confidential reports about them through their intelligence officers (*barīds*). Deputies of the central government were posted in all the departments of the provincial government to watch their working. All the ministries at the capital had control over the corresponding department in the province. The provincial military department was under the local *'āriz* who was responsible to the *'āriz-i-mumālik* at the centre. Thus despite their power in their own realm, the governors were closely watched by the central government and in case they were found to be disloyal, defiant or dishonest, they were severely dealt with. The Sultān, too, made frequent visits, and had the opportunity of assessing for himself the worth and performance of his governors.

The head of the governor's secretariate was the *dabīr*. Other officials were the *mutasarrif*, *kārkun* and *amil*. The district was administered by an *amil*, or *nāzim*. The administrator of a town (having about a hundred villages) was known as *amir-i-sadah*. He was assisted by a number of junior officials like the *kārkun*, *muqaddam*, *chaudharī*, *patwārī*, *piyādh* and so forth.

Feudatory States—Rulers of feudatory states had greater autonomy. The most important condition was the regular payment of tribute in the form of land revenue and *jizyā*. The Sultān's name was included in the coins struck by the rulers of the vassal states, and sometimes if there were a number of Muslim subjects, the *khutba* would also be read in his name. Some of the south Indian princes, like those of Ranthambhor

(1215) and Devagiri (1296) issued their own currency. If the vassal ruler respected the Sultān's edicts, he was free to have his own arrangements in respect of administration, collection of land revenue and justice.

Centrally Administered Territory—This was called the *khālsā* domain. Though later the term had a purely fiscal connotation, in the thirteenth century the administrative organisation of these lands was on a different pattern to the usual one. They were administered directly by the *dīwān-i-wizārat* through his officials the *amīrs* and *shahnahs* (superintendents). Bhatindā was in charge of a *shahnah*. Similarly the territory near about Delhi known as haveli-i-Delhi or Hariānah was administered as *khālsā*.

2) Under the Mughals

The Mughal empire was also divided into provinces called *sūbahs*. In Akbar's time there were fifteen provinces which increased to twenty under Aurangzīb. The provincial governor was known as the *sūbahdār* or simply as *sūbha*.⁸ Each *sūbah* consisted of several *sarkārs* which were further divided into *mahāls* or *parganās*. A convenient number of villages (*mauzās*) formed a *mahāl*. The village meant not only the habitation but also the land surrounding it. Village boundaries were clearly demarcated. Smaller hamlets were included in the village. In Shāh Jahān's time a new unit in between the *sarkār* and the *parganā* was created. This was called a *chaklah* and consisted of a number of *parganās*.

The Mughals were inclined to keep power concentrated in the central government. If a provincial governor was made too powerful there was always the risk that he might break away from the empire. So despite the fact that the *sūbahdār* was saddled with many functions and a great deal of responsibility the heads of all the departments under him had their counterparts in the central government and they were responsible direct

⁸ In Akbar's time he was known as the *sipah sālār* and later as *nāzim*. He was also sometimes called *sāhib-i-sūbāh*.

to them. This diluted much of the governor's authority over his own officers, a rather delicate position indeed. If one adds to this the *waqā'i' nawīs* (news writer) and the *khufiyanawīs* (secret reporter) who sent confidential reports to the emperor, one can understand how difficult it was for the governors to deceive their liege lord. Yet some of them, particularly the more distant ones, managed to do so. Many were greedy and rapacious, making huge fortunes.

The governor was not allowed to intervene in the administration of justice or in the levy of taxes. He could not lead prayers or act as the people's spiritual leader. He was not authorised to declare war or make peace. He had to get the emperor's previous permission for this. The infliction of capital punishment also required prior approval of the emperor. His duties were as follows:

- (1) Maintenance of law and order and implementation of the Imperial decrees.
- (2) Supersession of local rebellions. In case of external aggression he sought the centre's help.
- (3) Deciding criminal cases.
- (4) Realising tribute from local *rājās* and chieftains, and if necessary assisting them in their revenue collection.
- (5) Recommending to the centre the names of officers who deserved promotion or rewards.
- (6) Sending weekly reports to the centre.

The governor was in brief the king's representative. He held his court but could not sit in the *jharokah*. He was in charge of the provincial troops. He possessed both civil and military authority.

Although the governors were transferred every two or three years, some of them found this time enough to abuse their powers and become independent. The long distances from the capital, the inadequate transport and communication, made the central authority weak despite all efforts to strengthen it, and enabled the governors to do what they liked.

Only high ranking *mansabdārs* with a command of at least two to three thousand were made governors. They were

appointed by a special *farmān* known as *farmān-i-sabati*, and their duties were contained in a document known as the *hidāyat-ul-quwaid*.

The next highest officer was the *dīwān*. He was in charge of of the revenues of the province, and his main duties were (1) Collection of all kinds of revenues and taxes, like land revenue, sales tax, octroi and so forth (2) Proper accounting and auditing of the revenue (3) Submission of accounts of expenditure to his counterpart in the centre, the Imperial *dīwān* (4) Increasing the area under cultivation, and advancing loans to the cultivators for this purpose. (5) Granting remission in land revenue in case of crop failure. (6) Sending fortnightly finance report of the province to the centre.

The provincial *dīwān* was appointed by the Imperial *dīwān* and was directly responsible to him. Although he was next to to the governor, in reality he was his close rival in ascendancy. The familiar Mughal policy of checks and balances operated here too. The *dīwān* and *sūbahdār* acted as a moderating influence on each other. There were instances of clash between the two, and in that case the centre intervened. Aurangzib, however combined the two posts in one.

The *bakshī* was appointed in consultation with the *mīr bakshī*, his counterpart in the centre. He was in charge of the military establishment in the province and looked after the recruitment of soldiers and their equipment. He inspected the troops and ensured that the *mansabdārs* maintained the actual number they were required to keep. The bills of the *mansabdārs* and their soldiers were passed by him. His representative went out with the troops when they were on the march, in order to settle these matters on the spot. As with other departmental heads, he was required to send a report about his work regularly to the centre.

The *dīwān-i-buyūtāt* was responsible for the maintenance of roads, buildings and the *kārkhānahs* of the province. When a *mansabdār* died he took charge of his property, prepared its inventory and sent it to the centre. He also attended to the kings's comfort when he visited the province.

The *kotwāl's* duties have been given in detail by Abu-'l-Fazl in '*Āin-i-Akbarī*: 'Through his night patrolling and watchfulness,

the citizens should enjoy the repose of security and the evil disposed lie in the slough of non-existence. He should keep a register of houses, and frequent roads, and engage the citizens in a pledge of reciprocal assistance, and bind them to a common participation of weal and woe. He should form a quarter by union of a certain number of habitations, and name one of his intelligent subordinates for its superintendence and receive a daily report under his seal, and of those who enter or leave it, and of whatever events therein occur. And he should appoint a spy one among the obscure residents with whom the others should have no acquaintance, and keeping their reports in writing employ a headful scrutiny. He should minutely observe the income and expenditure of various classes of men, and by a refined address make his vigilance reflect honour on his administration. Of every guild of artificers he should name one as a guildmaster, and another as a broker, by whose intelligence the business of purchase and sale should be conducted. From these he should require frequent reports. When the night is a little advanced he should prohibit people from entering or leaving the city. He should set the idle to some handicraft. He should discover thieves and the goods they have stolen, or be responsible for the loss. He should so direct that no one shall demand a tax or cess save on arms, elephants, camels, cattle, sheep, goats and merchandise. He should suffer no alteration in the value of the gold and silver coin of the realm, and its diminution by wear in circulation he shall recover to the value of the deficiency. He should use his discretion in the reduction of prices, and not allow purchases to be made outside the city. The rich shall not take beyond what is necessary for their consumption. He shall examine the weights and make the *ser* not more or less than 30 *dams*. In *gaz*, he should permit neither increase nor decrease and restrain the people from the making, dispensing, buying or selling of wine; but refrain from invading the privacy of domestic life. Of the property of a deceased or missing person, who may have no heir, he shall make an inventory and keep it in his care. He should appoint persons of respectable character to supply the public water-courses; and prohibit women from riding horses. He should direct that no ox or buffalo or horse or camel be slaughtered, and forbid the

restriction of personal liberty and the selling of slaves. He should not suffer a woman to be hurt against her inclination, nor a criminal deserving of death to be impaled, nor any one to be circumcised under the age of twelve'.

This is a very detailed list, and doubtless the *kotwāl's* job must have been a strenuous one. The very ablest and active of officers would qualify for it. Abu-'l-Fazl gives the qualifications which were necessary. 'The appropriate person for this office' he says, 'should be vigorous, experienced, active deliberate, patient, astute and human'. It may be mentioned that there was a *kotwāl* at the capital town and also in other important cities of the empire. But the provincial *kotwāl* i.e. the one at the capital, had no jurisdiction over those who manned the cities. The *muhtāsib* was another officer of the provincial government. He was the censor of morals. He had many other duties too. He was expected to prevent cruelty to animals and maltreatment of slaves. His duty was to see that schoolmasters did not punish children too severely. Foundlings and orphans were under his care. He also had duties similar to the present day municipalities. Water supply, public thoroughfares city walls, markets, hospices, inns were all in his charge. He provided space for encampment of caravans, prevented encroachments, ordered the demolition of dangerous houses and forbade high buildings if they interfered with the privacy of the neighbours.

The *qāzī* was the provincial head of the judiciary. He was appointed by the chief *qāzī*. He commanded great respect and could punish even men of influence if they did something wrong. Barnī emphasises purity of character as an indispensable qualification for this post. He says 'Not only learning but fear of God and abstinence from all evil things are qualities essential in a *qāzī*'.

District Administration—It has been mentioned that the provinces were divided into *sarkārs* (districts). The administrative head in the *sarkār* was the *faujdār*, who had the same functions in the district as the *sūbahdār* had in the province. He was appointed by the emperor directly, but sent his reports to the *sūbahdār*. If he wished, however, he could also write

direct to the Imperial court. His main duty was to maintain peace, suppress rebellions by local *zamindārs* and ensure law and order. As his name implies, he was commander of the military force stationed in his district. He patrolled the roads and also assisted in the collection of revenue. The *amil* or *amulguzār* had the same duties in the district as the *dīwān* (under whose supervision he worked) had in the province. He was in direct touch with the cultivators and helped them in growing better and more intensive crops. He assessed the land, advanced loans and recovered them in convenient instalments, and was the revenue head of the district as the *faujdār* was the administrative head. He was the chief link between the centre and the townsmen. He was wholly subordinate to the *sūbahdār*. An important report he sent every month to the Imperial court, apart from the routine one to the *dīwān*, was about the prices of commodities, the economic condition of the people in his jurisdiction and any information of acts of repression by *jāgīrdars* or others.

The next important officer in the district was the *kotwāl*. His duties have already been narrated. They were mainly concerning law and order, price control and the prevention of hoarding, trial of criminals, regulation of weights and measures and surveillance of people coming to the *sarkār* or leaving it. There was a *qāzī* in districts also, as in the provincial capital. Apart from a judge he functioned as paymaster of the *madad-i-ma'āsh* made by the *sadr-us-sudūr*. These *madads* were grants for benevolent purposes to learned and pious Muslims, in the form of cash or land assignments. The *qāzī* also led Friday prayers, solemnized marriages, and during Aurangzīb's reign, supervised the collection of *zakāt* and *jizyā*.

The district was further divided into *parganās* which were governed by three important officers, the *shiqdār*, the *amīn* and the *qānūngo*. The *shiqdār* was the administrative head. The name had been coming down from the days of the Afghāns. Later on the officer came to be called a *karorī*. His main duties were maintenance of law and order, trial of criminal cases and assistance to the *amīn* in collection of land revenue. The *amīns* and *qānūngos* were revenue officials. They surveyed the

land, assessed it to revenue and arranged for the collection of the dues. In some of the *parganās qāzīs* administered justice.

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Under the Sultāns the village administration was left mostly with the *panchāyats*. The overall charge was that of the *muqtī*. The Mughals too carried on with the *panchāyats*. The *panchāyat* was the village council, and it elected the village headman who was the link between the village and the government. He collected the revenue and deposited it in the treasury. The demand as fixed by Akbar was a third of the gross produce, while Aurangzib raised it to a half. The headman was allowed to keep two and a half per cent of the revenue as the fee for realisation. The *patwārī* who worked under the headman's supervision kept a record of the area cultivated along with the cultivator's name and the land revenue paid. The *panchāyāt* looked after all the affairs of the village, like education, irrigation, fairs and festivals, law and order. They also decided judicial cases. Foreign travellers called them 'little republics'.

THE ARMY—IN THE SULTANATE

The Mughal Army

The army of the Sultāns predominantly consisted of cavalry. It was because of their superior cavalry that they could overcome the armies of Hindu *rājās*. Infantry played a secondary role. They had artillery. The use of firearms were known to the later Sultāns. Some scholars are of the view that they were in use from the time of Iltutmish, but there is no positive evidence for this. 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī's army used firearms. They were also used by the rulers of the Bahmanī kingdom and by those of Vijayanagara. The army of the Sultāns was looked after by the '*āriz-i-mumālīk*. 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī introduced the system of branding horses. Every army had well trained scouts, surgeons and ambulances attached to it. Sappers and miners were used for storming forts. It was well stocked with provisions. The army was posted on the frontiers and also at convenient points

from where it could be moved to deal with rebellions and disturbances. Turks, Afghāns, Persians, Mongols and Indians formed the army ranks. There were Hindu soldiers, too, and Qutb-ud-dīn Aibak was largely successful in his conquests because of them. In battle array there was the centre, the two wings, two flanking parties, the vanguard and the rearguard. Elephants protected by iron plates, with warriors and archers seated on the howdah, were kept in front. Mulim volunteers having their own arms often joined the troops without any payment. They were there for a share in the loot and inspired by taking part in a holy war (*jihād*) which provided them merit and a place in heaven by killing infidels.

The Mughal army had five divisions viz, the cavalry; the elephant force, the infantry, artillery and matchlock men and the navy including the river craft. Abu-'l-Fazl mentions six sections of the cavalry. These were as follows: (1) The troops of the *mansabdārs* (2) Contingents provided by tributary *rājās* and chief (3) The personal contingent of the emperor (4) Those skilled soldiers who could not maintain horses because of their poverty. These were used for policing duty. (5) Troops whose horses were branded but who were not attached to any *mansabdār* (6) Auxiliary troops temporarily lent to certain *mansabdār*. They were reinforced by additional troops.

According to the *Āin-i-Akbarī* troops who joined the army from Central Asia received a higher salary, perhaps to provide them with an attraction. They received twenty-five rupees per month instead of twenty ordinarily paid. The *mansabdārs* charged five per cent as administrative commission for overhead charges, and this was deducted from the salaries. One month's salary was deducted each year for paying the cost of the horse and other equipment given by the state till the debt was discharged.

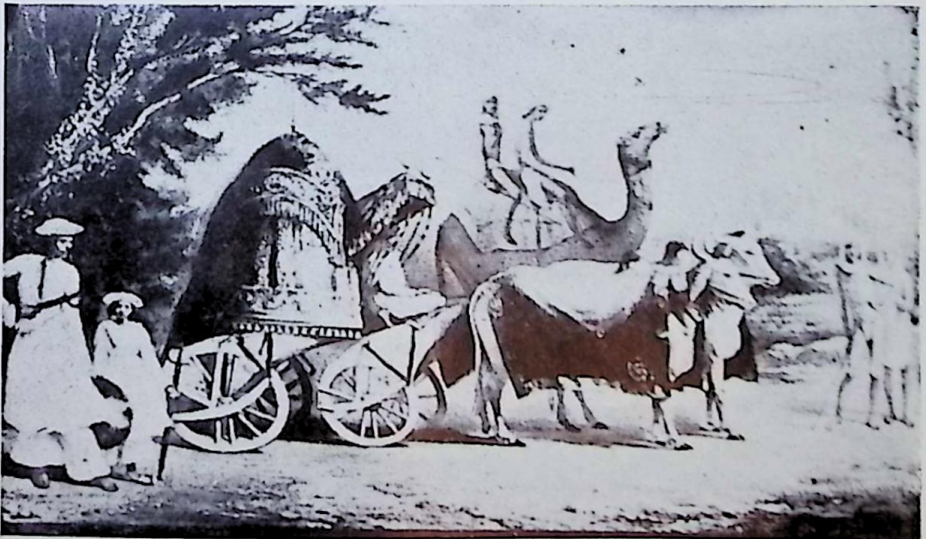
The Mughals knew little about artillery, and whatever knowledge they had was borrowed from the Turks and from Constantinople. The Portuguese also provided them some assistance. The fondness for heavy artillery was a great drawback. As Irvine says: 'The Mughals were very fond of large ordnance, but such pieces were more for show than use.... These huge guns made more noise than they did harm; they could not be fired many times a day, and were very liable to burst and destroy the

men in charge'. There was light artillery too (called *topkhāna-i-rikāb*). This usually moved with the emperor and was more effective. Bernier describes it thus: 'It consisted of fifty or sixty small field-pieces, all of brass; each piece mounted on a well made and handsomely painted carriage, containing two ammunition chests, one behind and another in front, and ornamented with a variety of small red streamers. The carriage, with the driver was drawn by two fine horses, and attended by a third horse, led by an assistant driver as a relay'. The heavy artillery was usually manned by Europeans. There were some matchlock men also.

There was no division into regiments. The army was a loose collection of units of varying sizes. There were no regular parades. Payment were not regular, and soldiers oppressed the people to get money for their livelihood. Troops owed greater allegiance to their *mansabdārs*, who were their paymasters, than to the emperor. The foreign element—Persians, Central Asian and the Afghān soldiers of fortune—served those who paid them most. Patriotism was not an incentive. They readily deserted to the highest bidder. The army was ill-equipped. A soldier had to provide his own horse. When he was in the thick of battle he was worried about his horse no less than about himself. There was no systematic supply line. The soldiers had to buy their provisions from common merchants and traders, It was easy for the enemy to cut off the source of supply, a device frequently used by the swiftly striking Marāthās. There was no prescribed uniform. Everyone dressed and conducted himself as he liked on the battlefield, usually flaunting his rank in war as much as in peace time. Soldiers and officers made their own arrangements for transporting their baggage. The Mughal *mansabdārs*, taking their cue from the commanders and the kings themselves, moved with their wives, concubines and attendants, witnessing wrestling matches and enjoying the hunt. It was a slow moving heavily encumbered army, in fact more like a procession than a swift striking deadly force. The Mughal army, despite its size, was hardly effective against the light quick moving detachments like those of the Marāthās, Sikhs and Bundelās. About the size of the army there is difference of opinion. According to Blochmann it was not more than



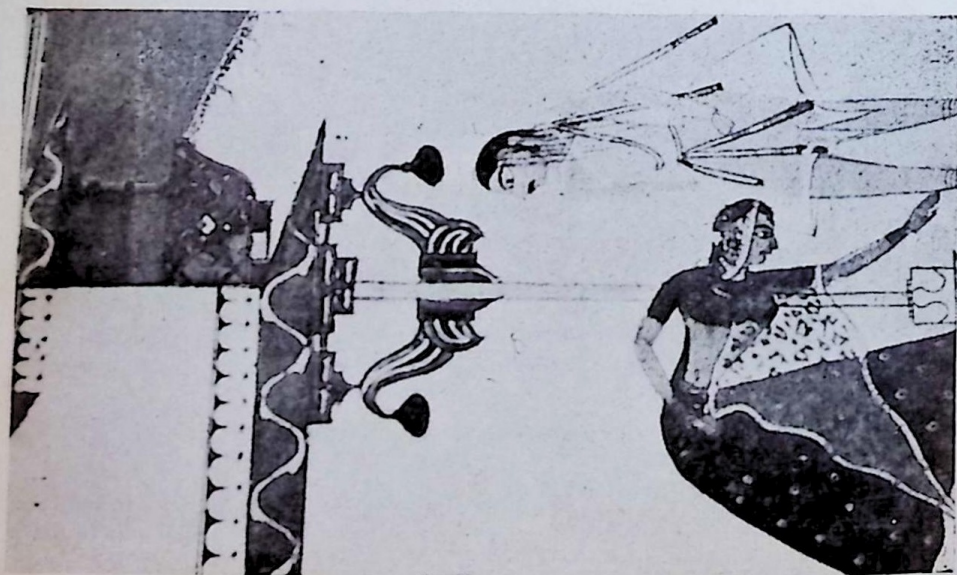
The Pilgrims' vision of Paradise



A Harem Carriage of Bahadur Shah'



Radha at her toilet
(Kangra Painting 1790)



Laur Chanda folio 149, Malwa (1530)

25,000. This seems to be an under estimation. But others who think the number ran into *lakhs* appear to be even more off the mark. Many of the *mansabdārs* showed many more soldiers in their records than they actually kept. Despite the practice of branding horses, there was a great difference between the numbers of troops they were believed to raise and the actual number maintained by them.

The Mughals had no organised navy. Arab sailors monopolised overseas trade. This was one of the drawbacks which made them completely vulnerable to attacks of European powers by sea.

(H) FINANCE AND CURRENCY

In the Sultanate

The Sultānate's basic income was from (i) *kharāj* and *ushr* (ii) *jizyā* or poll tax (iii) *khum* (booty) and (iv) *zakāt* (income tax on Muslims). The *kharāj* or land revenue was a fifth of the gross produce. This was raised to a half by 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, but again brought to a fifth after him. The *ushr* was a tax of one tenth of the produce. *Jizyā* (which has already been dealt with) was a poll tax on non-Muslims. It was, of course levied on idolators, though one Muslim historian has by an ingenious interpretation of a text, tried to bring out that it was paid even by Hindus who had turned Muslims.⁹ *Khum*, or spoils of war, were partly distributed to the troops and partly went into the treasury. According to Muslim jurists one-fifth was to be appropriated by the state. In practice it was much more. Spoils of war could, of course, be possible in a victory over Muslims also, but apart from a few isolated cases the wars

9 See A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule In India*, Central Book Depot, 1976, p. 233. He bases his view on Firūz Tugluq's observation (*Fatuhāt-i-Firūzshāhī*) that he abolished *jizya* on those who embraced Islām, as a mark of special favour. This, however, rather implies that the Sultān specially favoured a convert. The 'special favour' would be that the stigma of being a convert would not apply to him. The observation merely draws a distinction between a Muslim by birth and a Hindu converted to Islām.

fought by the Mohammedan rulers were generally against Hindus, infidels as they called them. So to say that 'the state appropriated the spoils taken even from Muslim opponents'¹⁰ may be true, but remains more or less a hypothetical truth.

The earliest record of collection of *zakāt* is in the reign of Firūz Tughluq. The proceeds were spent in religious endowments and pensions to the *'ulamā*. Although the advantage from this impost went to Muslims alone, the tax was levied on non-Muslims also. Not only that, those who were not Muslims had to pay double.

Apart from these prominent sources of revenue there must have been other taxes also, for we find Firūz Tughluq abolishing them.¹¹ Tolls and ferry dues gave some income. Mines were worked by the state and buried treasure was taken into the treasury. The government being controlled by the king's household establishment, public revenues could be squandered by him, for there was no privy purse. Ruknuddin Firūz and Kaiqubād spent all the money on their pleasures, the latter emptying the treasury for his favourite dancing girls.

In regard to coinage, the Turks adapted the existing one to their use. The Hindu design of the bull and horseman with the sovereign's name in Devanāgri was changed by Balban more than sixty years after the conquest of Delhi. The *jital*, a debased adaptation of *dehliwala* became the normal coin. In Mahmūd's time gold coins were minted, often retaining the Hindu figure of the goddess, Lakshmī, with the sovereign's name in Indian letters. Iltutmish started the silver *tankā*, the forerunner of the modern rupee. This became the standard monetary unit of the Delhi Sultānate. The caliph's name was included along with the *kalimah* in 1225. Iltutmish also brought out a new *jital* coin with a lower silver content. From Balban's reign a series of bilingual mixed metal coins came into use whose silver content was less than a *dehliwala* but more than *jital*. Its value was about two *jitals*. A three-*jital* piece was also introduced of value one-sixteenth of a *jital*. This was the forerunner of the erstwhile anna coin (now ten paisā). Copper coins were the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹¹ See chapter on *The Tughluq Dynasty ante*.

adl, which in Muhammad Tughluq's reign was replaced by the *fals*, four of which equalled a *jital*.

Early coins bore no mint name. Iltutmish started the practice of giving the name of the mint on his *tankā*. Balban established a number of new mints. One of his new coins was minted at the Khittā Sultānpur. A silver *tankā* reads 'Khittā Alwar'. The silver *tankā* was the main coin in the period of the Delhi Sultānate. The Sultāns were experts in coinage and the relative value of the currency pieces remained more or less constant during their rule.

In the Mughal Empire

The main sources of revenue during the Mughal period continued to be practically the same as in the Sultānate. In practice there were many others also. Not all that was realised from the people, went into the treasury. The taxes did go into it, but not the exactions. It made no difference in terms of money to those who paid; but obviously it was only the taxes which could confer benefits on them when a benevolent monarch so desired. Direct taxes were on incomes, profession and property. In some instances, as in the case of *jīzyā* and *zakāt*, they were taxes on persons and had a religious angle. The extensive commercial undertakings of the state including the *kārkhānahs*, brought income. Indirect taxes like customs duties, transit dues, octroi, sales tax and excise duty, yielded a fair amount of money. Some was obtained from fines and judicial fees. Other sources of income were as follows: (1) From the property of those dying intestate (2) Salvages from shipwrecks (3) Registration fee paid on certain ceremonies performed (4) Presents from officers, subjects, and foreign rulers through embassies received by the emperor (5) Spoils of war, indemnity and plunder (6) Tribute from vassal states. Much of this was exaction rather than tax.

Despite the large sums obtained from these miscellaneous means, land revenue was the largest constant source of income. The state's share of the revenue was between a third and a half in various periods of Mughal rule. In certain Hindu states, like Rājputānā, it was as less as a seventh or an eighth.

The payment was obtained by crop sharing or in cash. One system was known as *kankut*. In this when the crop ripened skilled appraisers estimated the yield and the state's share was given at harvesting. In the cash system there were two methods. The *zabti*, the system most in use, and the more just and rational, was developed by Akbar on the lines laid down by Sher Shāh. The empire was divided into more than 170 assessment circles, each one with its own schedule. The average produce per *bighā* of various crops in fields of varying fertility was taken as the basis. Akbar converted the demand, which in Sher Shāh's time was in kind, to cash. The cultivator paid only for land which was cultivated. The other cash system, which Aurangzīb favoured, was arbitrary. Known as *nasaq*, the basis in this was the average of the land revenue paid by the cultivator for all his lands during the last ten years. As payment in the *zabti* system was only on land under cultivation the state was eager to increase such area in order to better the income. In the *nasaq* system the state had no such interest, and cultivation suffered.

Abu-'l-Fazl estimated Akbar's revenue at '13,21,36,831 rupees and 12,00,000 betel leaves'. 'Abul Hamīd Lāhori estimated Shāh Jahān's revenue at 38,68,16,584 rupees.¹² This was of course only part of the total income of the state.

As in most other branches of administration, it was left to Akbar to revolutionise the Mughal currency. Bābur and Humāyun did not have the time to do anything. Sher Shāh introduced a rupee of 175-8 grains and the copper *dām*. Akbar appointed capable officers and revolutionised his mints. He got coins of gold, silver and copper issued. Most of the metals were imported, for apart from some copper mines in Rājputānā, which too were insufficient, very little of these precious metals was available in India.¹³

12 *History & Culture of the Indian People*, Bharitya Vidya Bhavan, vol. VII, (The Mughal Empire), 1974, p. 534.

13 Terry tells us that the Mughals welcomed merchants from outside who could exchange bullion for Indian goods. It was a crime to take away silver from India. The English East India Company sent £ 22,000 worth bullion in 1601, £ 52,000 in 1616, £ 800,000 between 1697 and 1702. In 1681 the bullion sent by it to Bengal alone was worth £ 320,000.

Akbar's gold coins were of twenty-six varieties and of different weights and values. Abu'l-Fazl mentions twenty-six gold coins, sixteen of silver and four of copper. Many of the gold coins were struck as novelties. The *sahansah*, for example, weighed about 102 *tolās* and could have little use as currency. Another gold coin, the *lal-i-jalālah* which was twenty-two *māshās* weight, was in circulation.¹⁴ A smaller gold coin, the *ilāhī*, was worth ten rupees. The chief silver coin was the rupee which weighed 172½ grains. A square silver rupee was introduced in 1577. Divisions of the rupee in coins of denominations of its half, quarter, fifth, eighth, tenth, sixteenth and twentieth were also minted. The *dām* or *paisā* was a copper coin weighing nearly twenty-one grammes. Under the Mughals there were forty to a rupee. Coins equivalent to half a *dām*, a quarter and an eighth, were also minted.

(I) LAW AND ORDER

The incessant wars in the Sultānate period of history could not possibly be conducive to a settled life. The movements of troops caused destruction of crops, and few were the Sultāns who bothered their heads about it or gave compensation. Besides the troops were often without pay, and they made up by ravaging the countryside. The peasants had to bear the expenses of their quartering. After every victory there was loot and plunder, greater enthusiasm being generated because most of the wars were in the nature of crusades. Revenue was quite often realised by the sword. Some of the Sultāns, like 'Alā-ud-dīn were oppressive, particularly on their Hindu subjects. Life in the Sultānate period was, therefore uncertain and insecure.

The Mughals built up a strong administrative organisation. They policed their empire with the headman in the village, the *faujdārs* in districts, and the *kotwāls* in urban towns. Despite this there were constant outbreaks of law and order. For example when Aurangzīb re-imposed the *jizyā* there was so much resentment and such an unruly crowd that the royal elephants

14 A *tolā* is a little more than ten grammes, and there are twelve *māshās* in one *tolā*.

38 A HISTORY OF INDIAN CIVILISATION : II/II

had to be brought out to maintain order. Describing the incident Khāfī Khān says, 'One Sabbath when the emperor went to prayers at the great mosque a vast crowd of Hindus thronged from the palace to the mosque. Every moment the crowd swelled, and his equipage was brought to a standstill. Then the elephants were brought out and charged the mob, and many people were trodden to death'.

Travel in Mughal India was unsafe and the roads infested with highway-men and robbers. Ralph Fitch who visited India during the years 1583-91 recorded that there were many thieves. They had no certain abode and moved from one place to another in the country. While on his way to Akbar's court, the Portugese priest, Father Monserrate came across a large number of thieves from Surāt to Āgrā. Abu-'l-Fazl recorded that in 1596 a *lakh* of gold *mohurs* had been sent to pay for equipment required by the army of the south. But this had to be detained at Gwālīor on account of the unsafe roads. William Hawkins who remained in India from 1608 to 1613 observed that the large number of outlaws and thieves made travelling impossible unless a large force accompanied those who moved about. William Finch who came to Bhadrār in January 1610 found the town filthy and full of thieves. 'The road from Gwālīor to Ahmadābād' he says 'was all a sandy woody country full of thievish beastly men'. From Ahmadābād to Cambay he found the way 'sandy woody and thievish'. The Bay of Cambay was difficult to cross because of very dangerous thieves who looted the people and then threw them into the sea. The same conditions were observed by Nicholas Withington who went to Cambay in 1613. He says 'one may go as soon from Āgrā to Sind as Surāt; but there is more thieving than the Mughal seeks to prevent'. He noticed Baluchi outlaws on the highways and on the river 'murdering as they rob.' Sir Robert Shirley found the way from Thattah to Āgrā much infested with thieves¹⁵ 'The country is now so full of thieves and outlaws' he says 'that one can hardly stir out of doors in any part of his dominions without a guard,

15 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Trübner 1875, vol. VI, p. 495.

as almost the whole people are in rebellion.¹⁶ He records that he was 'plundered on the way of my clothes and everything else about me'.¹⁷ John Willoughby at Āgrā wrote to the Surāt factory in April 1623 that the roads were very dangerous, 'for here is nothing but killing in every one of these parts'.¹⁸ Another letter from Ahmadābād to Surāt says 'The roads are so full of robbers that no one can pass'.¹⁹ In the wars of the succession that occurred after Shāh Jahān, conditions became worse. Manucci says of these times 'The villagers and thieves were plundering on the highways and created a good deal of tribulation to travellers, robbing and slaying them'.²⁰ Bernier, who was in India from 1656 to 1668 says there were frequent cases of robberies in the country.²¹ Dr John Francis Careri, the Italian traveller who visited India in 1695 says that there was no safety from thieves, nor were there caravanserais for travellers.²² In Aurangzīb's times conditions were so bad that the emperor himself complained about it to Prince A'zam: 'I have come to know that the royal road between Bahādurpūr and Khūjastehbūniād (Aurangābād) is not free from danger. Highway men rob the merchants and travellers of their goods. Wayfarers cannot travel in security. When such robbery takes place near the quarters of your and mine armies, woe to the condition of distant roads'.²³ Writing again to A'zam, Aurangzīb laments about the lack of law and order: 'Everyday in the district of Hājipūr, Miyānpūr and other police stations, strife and quarrel, oppression and tyranny, take place. The Kolis plunder Mairganj situated close to the army. They bind the inhabitants of the town and carry them away'.²⁴ The emperor also notes the presence of robbers in the Deccan near Ahmadnagar.

16 *Ibid.*

17 *Ibid.*, p. 495-6.

18 English Factories, 1622-3, p. 239.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Manucci *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 1., p. 307.

21 Bernier, *Travels In the Mogul Empire*, Constable, p. 369.

22 *Indian Travels of Careri*, p. 216. But Thevenot, the French traveller, found inns between Āgrā and Delhi. Manucci also mentions them.

23 *Letters of Aurungzebe*, Trans. J.H. Bilmoria, Luzac, 1908, p. 26.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

'Robbers are practising their profession from Chamārkūndeh to Kādirābād,' he wrote to A'zam. 'Very few travellers traverse the road in safety'.²⁵

Apart from highway robbers and thieves, thugs harassed travellers on the road linking Āgrā and Delhi. There are no mentions of these. A beautiful woman who was in league with them would entice a wealthy traveller, and ask for a ride with him on his horse. She would then throw a snare round his neck from behind and strangle the unsuspecting man. Her associates would fall on him and finish him off.²⁶

The Mughal emperors did try to secure law and order. Some of them succeeded also. But the accounts of contemporary travellers and visitors show that the success was partial and was restricted to certain regions only. One of the major reasons was the bribery and corruption among officers, which persisted in spite of the drastic steps taken by some of the Mughal emperors against them. Even a governor could bribe the emperor to secure his continuance in office.²⁷ Presents were freely given to secure favour. Jalā'ir Khān, for example promised Nūr Jahān three *lakhs* of rupees from his income for getting the governorship of Orissā. When he failed to get the appointment he demanded return of the bribe money, which he got only after a great deal of trouble.²⁸ Ibrāhīm Khān, the Bengal governor (1617-23), promised to make Mīrzā Nathan *thānedār* on payment of Rs. 2,000²⁹. Many other examples exist. The failure of the system was more in implementation than in concept, as indeed has been the case almost all through Indian history. But the peculiar thing about law and order under Muslim rulers was that despite the element of fear generated by tortures and punishments—Shāh Jahān would even get his guilty officers bitten by poisonous snakes—the system did not work. Thevenot tells us of a *kotwāl* who threatened an Armenian merchant whose goods were stolen, with torture, if he did not take back his complaint.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

26 Thevenot, *Indian Travels*, III, p. 41.

27 *English Factories*, 1630-4, p. 193; Tavernier, I, p. 17.

28 *Bahāristān-i-Ghābi*, 11, p. 634.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 633.

In another case when the *kotwāl* could not trace out a burglary he gave the complainant a good beating till the man was forced to say that he had no grouse.

(J) APPRAISEMENT OF CONDITIONS EXISTING IN THE SULTANATE AND IN MUGHAL INDIA

Both under the Sultāns and in the period of Mughal emperors, there remained a vast difference between the common people and the aristocracy. Society was composed of extremes. There were the very rich and the very poor: 'Weavers naked themselves, toiled to clothe others. Peasants, themselves hungry, toiled to feed the town and cities. India, taken as a unit, parted with useful commodities in exchange for gold and silver, or in other words, gave bread for stones. Men and women, living from season to season on the verge of hunger, could be contented so long as the supply of food held out; when it failed, as it so often did, their hope of salvation was the slave-trader, and the alternatives were cannibalism, suicide, or starvation. The only way to escape from this system lay through an increase in production, coupled with a rising standard of life, but this road was barred effectively by the administrative methods in vogue, which penalised production, and regarded every indication of increased consumption as a signal for fresh extortion'.³⁰

The general conditions in the Sultānate and under the Mughals, varied from ruler to ruler, as in inevitable in all despotic governments. But if generalisations could at all be made, barring a few of them like Muhammad Tughluq, Mubārak Shāh, Bahlūl Lodī, Husain Shāh of Bengal, Sher Shāh and the great Akbar, most of them were bigots and intolerant of faiths other than Islām. Again, very few of them—exceptions like Fīrūz Tughluq, Sher Shāh and Akbar apart—had either the time or the inclination to do anything effective for the welfare of the people they governed.

Architecture flourished, and wonderful buildings like the Tāj Mahal were made. The dazzling peacock throne came into

30 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, 1923, pp. 304-5.

existence. The splendour of courts overawed the people and amazed foreign visitors. Only those who made these things possible, were forgotten. Deprived of their full wages, starved, and living hand to mouth, they had little share in the empire's glory. Kings tried to set a high standard of justice. Muḥammad bin Tughluq himself attended his *qāzī*'s court like an ordinary citizen and, accepting the verdict, paid compensation to the person he had wronged. Similarly Sultān Ghiyās-ud-dīn A'zam Shāh of Bengal humbly appeared before the *qāzī* when a widow whose son he had by accident killed complained against him. Jahāngīr showed his readiness to give quick redress by hanging the chain of justice outside his palace. But these were just symbolic acts. In practice very few persons could have the courage to petition the king. The chain of justice was hardly ever used. The long journey to the capital was tedious as well as expensive. Even if one reached there, an audience with the emperor was not easy. In the absence of any written law there was great scope for discretion which could be used to good advantage by corrupt judges. To obtain justice was thus an expensive affair. A popular saying was 'To trust the *qāzī* is to court misfortune'.

The Mughal nobility too became depraved and corrupt. M. Athar Ali says: 'What we know for certain is that the nobles were, by far and large, corrupt and open bribe-takers, and in this they were but pale imitators of the emperor himself. They often misused their administrative authority to compel merchants and peasants to pay them illegal dues'.³¹ With this kind of nobility, which constituted the topmost echelon of the Mughal government, it was difficult to expect a fair or benevolent deal. 'Bribery was, for all practical purposes, the chief method by which a subject could secure the aid and assistance of the administration, either for his own protection or for the destruction of others, both in accordance with, and in direct opposition to, all the regulations of the state and Imperial orders'.³²

The condition of jails in the Mughal period was thoroughly

31 M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, Asia, 1966, p. 172.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

unsatisfactory. Badly maintained forts were used as jails. The detention was aimed at making the person imprisoned weak and submissive. Often it was a prelude to execution at some convenient time afterward. Slow poisoning with large doses of opium was one treatment for the hapless captive. Sulaimān Shikoh was killed by Aurangzīb in this manner. Those who bribed the jailor could escape. Hindu prisoners were released if they accepted Islām. Fines, confiscation of property, torture (in some cases to extort confessions) and mutilation of limbs, were other punishments. Executions were generally held on Tuesdays, before the emperor.

Mughal administration was in essence foreign. Most of the high posts were reserved for outsiders, and few went to Indians. It was just as when the British rule was established, the top executive officers from viceroys and governors to district level officers were Britons. Akbar, with his wider vision, made notable exceptions. Other kings trusted Hindu chiefs and commanders only half-heartedly and with suspicion. For example when Sawāi Jai Singh became the Mughal governor of Mālwa (1729-30, 1732-37) he advocated a policy of appeasement towards the Marāthās who had grown very powerful under the *peshwā*, Bājī Rāo I. The Mughal court thought this was because he was a Hindu. Sa'ādat Khān decried this, and told the emperor 'I want to save the empire'. It was only when Sa'ādat, was worsted by the *peshwā's* forces that the Mughal emperor was convinced that Jai Singh was not siding with the Marāthās but giving sensible advice in good faith.

To say that Islāmic rule gave nothing to India would be just as wrong as to say that it was an era of 'good administration, high ideals of government and meticulous care for the welfare of the the people'.³³ The rational method of revenue assessment introduced by Sher Shāh and developed in Akbar's time under Todar Mal was a triumph of revenue administration. The roads and *sarāis*, particularly the famous Grand Trunk Road built by Sher Shāh, were monumental works. The regulation of weights and measures and prices of commodities,

33 I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, N.V. Publications, p. 260.

social reforms like prohibition of the manufacture of intoxicants, the commendable efforts to introduce prohibition, control of prostitution, the regulation of public morals, the abolition of evil customs like *sati*, and the other salutary reforms, were certainly commendable. Mughal architecture and art, the contribution in the field of culture and manners, enriching of Indian literature and the evolution of Unānī medicine, are development of priceless value.

The truth, as in all cases, lies midway. The Mughal empire was neither so perfect and benign as some historians would have it. Nor was it such a hopeless mess as brought out by foreign visitors. The Sultāns and the emperors tried their best to turn their attention to public welfare. Unfortunately two factors greatly came in the way of these good intentions. The first was the lack of time. Territorial expansion and the inevitable wars of succession took up most of their time and energy. And when such expansion was fully achieved, as in the time of Aurangzīb, the empire became unmanageable. It was a vicious circle. Too much was as bad as too little. The despotic system succeeds only when there is a strong central control. With a sprawling empire such control is not possible. The other factor was bigotry. Few rulers of the Muslim empires could rise above it. One can hardly rule over a people by a riding roughshod over their sentiments. Such a rule may last for some time, but not for long. The horse moves when the spurs of oppression dig into its sides, but he serves his rider best when he is assured of affection. The Mughals who were good horse riders ought to have realised this. Some did, others didn't. Unfortunately they kept pulling too hard the reins of bigotry. In fact power is always allied with its downfall, just as after reaching the highest point in the barometer the mercury must fall. So was it with the age of Pericles and with the grand Roman empire. So too with the mighty Mughals for, 'The greater the power the more dangerous the abuse'.³⁴ As for the poor, the Mughals are perhaps to be blamed as much as any others, for whatever the rule their condition, after the golden days of the early Indian empire, remained the same. So was it then; so indeed it is now.

34 Edmund Burke, Speech in the House of Commons Feb 7, 1771.

'In a change of rule among the citizens, the poor change nothing beyond the name of their master'.³⁵

(K) THE ADMINISTRATION OF HINDU STATES

Between the Hindu Downfall and The Turkish Monarchy (100 to 1300).

Theory of Kingship

The Nītiśāstra and the commentaries on the Smṛiti constitute the literature that defines the political theory and the administrative organisation existing between the end of the Hindu rule and the establishment of that of the Turks. The view of kingship which emerges from these writings is as follows. It was not necessary that the king should be particular of any one caste like the Kshatriya. What was required was only that one who was made king should faithfully perform the duties prescribed. The rites of coronation were deemed to be merely illustrative. Anyone who was proclaimed king according to the existing usage of that particular country could perform the kingly function. The king could levy taxes but he had to guarantee in lieu of this, protection of his subjects. For this he had to be familiar with the art of good administration. Lakṣmīdhara, the author of *Kṛtyakalpataru*, who based his ideas about kingship on the old Smṛiti texts of Manu and Nārada, believed in the divine origin of kingship. The people were bound to absolutely honour him and to obey his command. Shukrāchārya, the writer of *Shukranītisāra*, believed that *karma* (works) was an important factor, and the king achieved his exalted position as protector of the people due to good deeds done in a previous existence and because of the practice of austerities. The best human and divine attributes were said to belong to the king. He was like a brother, a father, preceptor and a friend. Shukra also emphasised the close bond between the ruler and the ruled. The king could not flourish without the people. They ought to fully support

³⁵ *In principatu commutando civium, i nī praeter domini nomen mutant Pauperes. Phaedrus. Fab., Book 1, 14, 1.*

a righteous king. They should not divulge his secrets and never even think of injuring or slaying him. The king should be saluted as though he was an incarnation of the lord Viṣṇu. He should be given the honour due to a god, an ascetic, a preceptor and a learned man. The king, too, should not fail to protect the people and to punish the wicked.

Shukra insists on righteousness in the king. The righteous king is of the nature of divinity while the unrighteous one is as a demon. Kings partake of any of the three well-known qualities—*sattva* (goodness or purity), *rajasa* (passion) and *tāmasa* (darkness). The *sāttvika* king is godly, the *rajasic* is just like any other ordinary man, while the one in whom the quality of *tāmasa* prevails is demoniac in nature.

An unrighteous king is not to be tolerated by the people. They should constantly frighten him 'by going, over to his virtuous and very powerful enemy.' They may even depose him if he does not mend himself : 'If the king, although high born, becomes averse to good qualities, policy and strength, and is unrighteous, he should be repudiated as the destroyer of the kingdom. In his place the *purohita* (court priest) should install a virtuous prince of his family for protection of the subjects after obtaining the approval of the latter.

Administrative Organisation of North India

The main dynasties which rose after the decline and fall of the Imperial Pratihāras of Kanauj were the Kalachuris, Chandellas, Paramāras, Gāhaḍavālas and Chāhamānas. The pattern of administrative set-up was a little different for each, but there were common features also. These may be detailed as follows : (1) The kings adopted Imperial titles. (2) They had a number of high ranking officers like the chief-justice, commander-in-chief and so forth (3) Apart from the central administration there were officers for administering towns and villages as well. Thus local government was not neglected.

The Gāhaḍavālas—The king, queen and the crown prince adopted dignified royal titles. The crown prince could make land-grants on his own. Among officers the *mantri* (minister)

senāpati (commander-in-chief) *dūta* (messenger) *pratiharā*, *bhāṇḍārīka* and *akshapaṭṣha* are mentioned. Districts (*viśhayas*) and towns (*pattanas*) had officers known as *adhikāripurushas*.

The Senas—The Senas continued the administrative organisation of the Pālas whom they succeeded, but also made improvements. They adopted the additional titles of *ashvapati* *gajapati* and *narapati*. Among officers one hears of the chief-justice, the minister for foreign affairs, the commander-in-chief, the keeper of the seal, chief accounts officer, chief of the palace guard, chief trainer of elephants and others including police and military officers. The district officer was known as *viśapati* (*viśaya*=a district). Cash assessment of land at standard rates was made for revenue. The administrative divisions were known as *bhukti*. The queen and the court priest had great political influence.

The Chāhamānas—Among the Chāhamānas the system of clan monarchies prevailed. There is record of the prevalence of municipal administration. In one of the records of this period we are told that a document was signed by sixteen Brahmins, two from each ward. This committee of Brahmins agreed to find out whatever was lost or snatched away from the *bhāṭas* and others.

Administrative Organisation of South India

The main south Indian dynasties were the Chālukyas, Cholas, Yādavas. Hoysalas and Pāṇḍyas. The common features of administration among these dynasties were more or less the same as among those of north India, viz., dignified royal titles adopted by the kings, officers for separate departments, and the spread of the administrative machinery to the village level. A peculiar feature was the grouping of towns and villages into numerical groups of 30, 300, 500, 1,000, 2,000 and so forth for purposes of administration. There was also some de-centralisation inasmuch as there were in some kingdoms ministers and officers for different areas. Another distinctive feature was the part played by women in administration, particularly among the Chālukyas.

The Chālukyas—Among the high officers of the Chālukyan

state are mentioned the general, the chief-justice, the minister for foreign affairs and so forth. Sometimes there are officers in charge of specific regions, as for example minister of peace and war for the Kannaḍa country or for the Lāla country. Different offices were often combined in the same person.

Towns and village were grouped to form districts in numerical groupings. The districts were under officers known as *mahā-maṇḍaleshvara*. Sometimes their wives shared the office. In the Kannaḍa tract the local administration was more complex. There were small units as well as large ones, the latter under princes and high officials. Both small and large units could be under one person. One officer often held several charges. A district was in rare instances governed jointly by civil and military officers.

The provinces were under governors. More or less the same kind of administration existed in them. There were separate officers for each branch of taxation. They could assign a portion of the revenue for pious objects. A remarkable feature was the appointment of women as governors. Chālukya queen and princesses, as for example Princess Akkādevi, governed some of the provinces. Sometimes they governed jointly with their husbands. The wives of governors were not only respected, they had considerable power as well.

Towns and villages had a corporate constitution. There were town councils and village assemblies of *māhājans*, along with their officers, the sheriffs, mayor, steward and so forth. These committees were often appointed as trustees for charities. They could also donate land to deserving persons.

The Chālukyas wisely allowed many of their feudatories to have a limited amount of autonomy under their suzerainty. This prevented their administration from being unnecessary overburdened and avoided wars and conflicts. Thus the great feudatory families like the Kadambas and Sindas could flourish under their banner.

The Cholas—The administration of the Imperial Cholas from the time of Rājārāja I (985-1014) onwards was a continuation of the one before. The kings assumed high titles. They employed high executive officers (*udan-kutṭam*) in their courts.

There was a composite administrative machinery. If contributions in money were made the secretary wrote out the king's order. Three chief-secretaries signed it. This was then entered in the books by three authorising officers, and endorsed by thirty-eight others. Then thirty-two officers of the accounts department met, four authorised the entry, one read the order one made the entry and one issued the revised account.³⁶ It was red tape with a vengeance !

There were village assemblies which functioned by themselves. They framed their own rules for qualifications of their executive and regarding their meetings. If necessary they could consult other local authorities to help them to decide an issue on which they were not quite clear.

The Yādavas—Among the chief officers of the Yādavas are mentioned the *senāpati*, *mahāpradhāna* and the *daṇḍa-nāyaka*. The Yādavas introduced a new administrative unit called the *desha*, sub-divided into *khampanakas*. They had feudatory lords under them, and would appoint a special commission for the governance of a feudatory state in case circumstances so required.

The Hoysalas—The Hoysalas of Dorasamudra had become a leading power in Mysore after the downfall of the Chālukyas. As with other dynasties, their kings too assumed Imperial titles, as for example *samasta-bhuvanāshraya* (refuge of the world) *mahārājādhirāja* and so forth. They also combined many offices in one, as the Chālukyas did.

The village assemblies functioned as before. They owned their own lands and received its revenues. Sometimes rich persons gave them gifts of money for maintaining temples out of the interest on the endowments. Minor disputes, like those about boundaries, were decided by them.

The Pāṇdyas—The Pāṇdyas became the leading power in south India in the thirteenth century. Their administrative

36 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1957 vol. V, p. 282.

institutions were much like those of the Cholas. They had joint-rulers. Among the highest officials was the prime-minister. Temples were given royal grants of revenue free lands.

The village assemblies administered justice. If one was not satisfied with their decision, he could appeal to the king's officers or the king himself. Village assemblies sometimes bought land and let it out permanently at a fixed rent. People of a number of villages would combine their resources for works like building temple. Thus the people showed their unity in helping themselves.

Administration of the Vijayanagara Empire

The Vijayanagara empire was the answer to Muslim aggression in the Deccan and in south India. It lasted for about three centuries, and achieved a glory which few empires have known, before the combined power of the southern Muslim states brought about its ruin and devastation.

The Vijayanagara empire had an administration which was strong as well as enlightened. Like all medieval empires the king was the fountainhead of all power. He was the head of the civil, military and judicial departments. But he was by no means an irresponsible despot. The care and well-being of the people was his concern. One of its greatest kings Krishnadevarāya wrote about the duties of a monarch in a work of his entitled *Āmuktamālyadā*. He says 'A crowned king should always rule with an eye towards *dharma* (duty). He should collect round him people skilled in statecraft, should investigate the mines yielding precious metals in his kingdom and extract the same, should levy taxes from his people moderately, should counteract the acts of his enemies by crushing them with force, should be friendly, should protect one and all of his subjects, should put an end to the mixing up of the castes among them, should always try to increase the merit of the Brahmins, should strengthen his fortress and lessen the growth of undesirable things and should ever be mindful of the purification of his cities'. Although succession was hereditary, the Vijayanagara kings realised that if they were to successfully face Muslim

aggression which always threatened them, only capable monarchs with high attainments could rule. So they nominated any one of their sons and brothers as their successors.

The king was assisted by a council of ministers appointed by him, whom he consulted on matters of state policy and administration. But he was not bound to accept their advice. The ministers held office at the king's pleasure. They were not restricted to any particular caste, and though sometimes hereditary, they were often selected on merit.

A secretariat also existed. There was an officer who looked after trade and commerce, the chief treasurer, custodian of the jewels, prefect of the police and chief master of the horse. Apart from these there were subordinate officials like *bhāṭs* who sang the king's praise, betel bearers, calendar makers, engravers and composers of inscriptions.

The empire was divided into provinces of which there were perhaps six, each under a viceroy or *nāyak*, usually a member of the royal family or a noble. They had civil, military and judicial powers, and collected revenue within their fiefs, of which one-third had to be deposited in the state treasury. Though the viceroys were strict in collections, they also looked to the welfare of the peasants. They encouraged agriculture, got trees planted and assisted in building temples. They were liable for severe punishment if they were disloyal, oppressive, or failed to pay the state's share of the revenue. As with the Mughal nobility, however, these *nāyaks* departed from the high traditions they had set for themselves, and during the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries when the power of Vijayanagara declined, they were responsible for causing considerable disorder.

There was also an efficient system of local administration. The village was the lowest unit. The *pañchāyat* (village council) was in charge of the village administration and had executive, judicial and police powers. Its officers were the village accountant, the village commandant the superintendent of forced labour and others. The officers were paid by grants of land or by a portion of the agricultural produce. The king maintained a hold over the village administration through an officer of his called the *mahānāyakāchārya* who had general powers of supervision.

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The land revenue department was under an officer known as the *aṭhavane*. Land was classified as wet, dry, and forest land (including orchards). The revenue was linked with the relative fertility of the land. It was somewhat more than one-sixth of the produce. There were other taxes also like the grazing tax, marriage tax, customs duties, tolls on roads, revenue from gardens and plantations, taxes on goods produced and on professions. Even prostitutes were taxed. The burden of taxation was thus high. In case of hardship, however, there were frequent remissions.

The king was the supreme judge. Regular courts settled disputes. There were four kinds. The stationary court (*pratiṣṭhita*) was held in towns and villages. The village assemblies sat in them. The circuit court of judges (*chala*) moved from place to place. The *mudrita* courts were presided by judges appointed by the central government. The king and his *sabhā* (known as *sastrita*) was the highest court. Punishments were severe. Penalties were generally of four kinds—fines, confiscation of property, ordeals and death. Crimes like theft adultery and treason were punishable with mutilation or death. Sometimes criminals were crushed under the feet of elephants.

In order to meet the aggression of the Muslim states of the Deccan the kings of the Vijayanagara empire maintained an efficient army. Soldiers were recruited from people of different creeds, even Muslims. Good horses were obtained from Ormuz through the Portuguese. There were elephants and camels too. Artillery was used. But the discipline and fighting strength of the army could not match that of the Muslims.

Like the Delhi Sultāns, the kings of Vijayanagara had an intelligence service which kept them informed about events in the remotest corner of the empire. A constant watch was kept by police officers on bad characters. Police parties patrolled streets at night. In case of theft police officials were required to catch the thief, and if they couldn't they made good the loss themselves.

Despite all their vigilance and good intentions the kings of Vijayanagara could not adequately control their provincial governors who often flouted the central authority. This speeded

up the empire's disintegration. Another weak point was the lack of productive commercial activity despite the resources. A lot of money was spent on maintaining a magnificent court and in building fine temples, but national wealth was unwisely used. The permission given to the Portugese to settle on the west coast was also a grave error. It brought a little gain no doubt, but the empire's stability was endangered.

Rajput Administration

The Rājput administration was based on the tribal system. The king was the head of the clan brotherhood. There were a number of small units ruled by a clan chief. If these chiefs were not satisfied with the king's rule they could depose him and nominate some other chief in his place.

A change was noticeable after the Sultānate came into being. The king's power considerably increased. Whenever a Rājput state was conquered by the Sultāns they exacted a tribute from the ruling king and allowed him to manage his own affairs. The leader of each sub-clan maintained his own troops. But when the danger of conquest by the Muslim Sultāns increased, the king began to maintain his own centralised army of infantry and cavalry instead of depending on the chieftains. Most of the Rajput states came under Mughal domination. The Mughals appointed the chieftains as *mansabdārs* and gave them hereditary *jāgirs* on condition that they assisted them when called upon to do so.

The Administrative System of the Marathas

Varying, and indeed sometimes opposed, views, have been expressed about the administration of the Marāthās. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly the Muslim chroniclers who regarded Shivājī and the Marāthās as enemies of the Muslim empire could not obviously have any praise for them. Secondly while the Marāthās had an efficient and orderly administration in their own territory, conditions in the ones they brought under their sway were left in a chaotic state, and the only interest the conquerors had was to realise their

chauth and other dues by the sword, sometimes devastating the countryside to force its payment. The Marāthā sources, and historians like Elphinstone who had the opportunity to study the Marāthā system from the inside, have therefore all admiration for it; while others who view the administration of the conquered territories, think otherwise. It was more or less the tale of the blind men who went to see the elephant. They could only describe what they had seen. Rawlinson says about the state of affairs in the subdued territories: 'Other Hindu states took a pride in improving the condition of the territory they conquered. They constructed temples, wells, canals, roads and other public works. The Marāthās did nothing of the kind. Their *mulkgiri* raids by destroying the industries and wealth of the countries overrun, merely killed the goose that laid the golden egg'.³⁷ Mountstuart Elphinstone, who after the *peshwā's* downfall in 1818 was appointed the first commissioner to administer the Marāthā country and initiate British rule in Mahārāshtra, found the system of the Marāthās excellent and wished to preserve as much of it as possible. Of the government of Shivājī he says 'The period of tranquillity was employed by Shivājī in giving a regular form to his government and none of his military successes raise so high an idea of his talents as the spirit of his domestic administration. Instead of the rules of a captain of banditti, we are surprised to find a system more strict and methodical than that of the Mughals'.³⁸ Shivājī was doubtless one of those brilliant leaders whom destiny has fashioned to lead the fortunes of nations. But the difficulty with him was the same as with many other such leaders, as for example Sher Shāh. He neither had enough time, nor worthy successors. So his vision of a Hīndu empire arose and vanished with him.

The King—Shivājī's concept of kingship went beyond the narrow one of most monarchs of his time. For them its task was confined to conquest and the realisation of revenue. Barring a few enlightened rulers like Akbar and Sher Shāh Sūr, the welfare of

37 *Cambridge History of India*, vol IV, p. 414.

38 *The History of India*, 1916, p. 616.

the people was not their concern. Shivājī's administration was broad-based and encompassed the entire life of the community. According to tradition he pledged his kingdom to his *gurū*, Rāmdās, just as Bharat placed Rāma's sandals on the throne of Ayodhyā and ruled for him: 'He worships the lord's sandals constantly, his heart overflowing with love. Thus reverencing the holy sandals in obedience, he rules the land.'³⁹

Just as in Bharat's rule the people prospered and justice prevailed, so, as the *Shiva Bhārat* says, under Shivājī 'The Mahārāshtra country attained its literal significance, viz., the great-nation, on account of Shivājī's efforts. The people of Mahārāshtra became rich and happy'.⁴⁰ Shivājī found the country in the hands of feudal overlords who were constantly at war with one another. These fief-holders were supreme in their own rights. They were unscrupulous and tried to grab as much money and power as they could. Each was for himself alone. They were inefficient, corrupt, luxurious and oppressive. Their loyalty was Mammon only, and they bowed to none else. Shivājī knew that this kind of feudalism could not provide the foundation for a strong empire. But he tactfully refrained from forcibly bringing these warring chieftains on their knees. Instead he got rid of their strongholds and castles from where they operated, and stopped the building of new ones. It was like smoking out the bees and plucking the bee-hives. The turbulent *zamindars* were tamed. The next step was to restrain them from plunder. He fixed their perquisites, and the exact amount they would pay the state as revenue, depending on the yield of the village.

Having put the fiefs in order, Shivājī turned to the villages. He abolished the practice of farming out the revenue to hereditary landlords. The revenue was collected by the village headman known as the *patel*. He was the spokesman for the farmers and the link between them and their king. That Shivājī was an administrative genius cannot be denied, even though he could not extend

39 *Rāmacharitmānasa*, Ayodhyā kāṇḍa, 325. *Nit pūjat prabhu pamavari prīti na hridayaṁ samāti. Māga māgi āyasu kurat raj kāj bahu bhānti.*

40 *Shiva Bhārat*, 10-32.

the benefits of his system to the territories he conquered. Vincent Smith, who is sometimes uncharitable without cause, calls him a robber and says he ruled over a robber state.⁴¹ If the kingdom of one who loots and plunders in the course of war, is considered to be a 'robber state' perhaps the entire Delhi Sultānate and the empires of most Mughal emperors could be called that too. Muslim kings counted loot as one of the sources of income, and part of it went into the treasury. Actworth has an entirely different view. 'Shivājī was a great administrator' he says. 'He found many institutions which survived for more than a century'.⁴² This view is shared by many others, like Grant Duff, Jaffar, Jadunath Sarkar and Ranade, apart from Elphinstone. 'Under Shivājī' says Grant Duff, 'the administration was conducive to the welfare and happiness of the people'.⁴³

It would not have been possible for Shivājī to have won over the wild hill chiefs if it were not for the feeling of love and confidence he inspired in them. He was impartial in his dealings, rewarding generously and punishing justly. For once people found a leader in whom they could put implicit trust; who was eager to obtain not their wealth but their goodwill. Those rich and powerful were always assured of patronage, but to the ordinary commoner it was a delightful change to find a ruler who cared for them too. *Omnia vincit amor*, 'love conquers all',⁴⁴ and Shivājī's conquests were not by the sword alone. As Sir Jadunath Sarkar says, 'Shivājī's dominions first all spread through the conquests of hearts which the honest and strong administrator alone can achieve among a simple and rustic population'.⁴⁵ It was with these benign qualities that Shivājī succeeded in subduing the headstrong hill chiefs, From chaos he created order. He brought together those who were ever drifting apart. From a medley of warring factions he created the Marāthā confederacy, the first Hindu nation born after years of Muslim domination.

41 *Oxford History of India*,

42 *Introduction to the Ballads of the Marāthās*, XX.

43 *History of the Marāthās*, vol. III-

44 Virgil, *Eclogues*, X., 69.

45 *Shivājī and His Times*, p. 29

The Council of Ministers

On Shivājī's coronation was promulgated the *Qanu Zābtā* or Code of Conduct which prescribed the duties of the eight ministers whom he appointed to help him in carrying out the administration. These were as follows:

- (i) The *peshwā* or *mukhya pradhān*—He was the chief-minister who supervised the general administration. His seal was affixed on all official documents just below that of the king. He acted on behalf of the king in his absence. If necessary he would be called to lead the armed forces in battles. The administration of newly conquered lands was put in his charge.
- (ii) The *amātra* or *majumdār*—He was the finance minister and supervised the income and expenditure of the state. His seal too found place on all official documents and the statements of income and expenditure. Like the *peshwā*, he was not a mere civil officer. He could be called upon to fight and protect territory if so required.
- (iii) The *sachiv*—He was in charge of the royal correspondence. He drafted letters and put them up before the king for his approval. His seal, too, was necessary on all royal documents. The liability to lead troops and administer conquered territory was his also,
- (iv) The *mantri* or *wagnis*—He kept a record of the king's activities and checked the invitees to the royal palace. He headed the intelligence department and kept track of all important happenings. He was to deal with all political problems, and his duties were akin to the home minister of modern governments. Like others he was also called upon to fight when needed, and to protect the Marāthā territories. His seal was necessary on royal documents.
- (v) The *senāpati* (commander-in-chief)—He looked after military affairs and led the army into battle,
- (vi) The *sumanta* (foreign minister)—He advised the king in matters concerning other states. He received envoys

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and sent missions whenever necessary with the king's permission.

- (vii) The *paṇḍit rāo* or *dāua ehyaksha*—was the head of the ecclesiastical department. He was in charge of all religious matters. As royal chaplain he performed ceremonies for the king. He was censor of public morals. He made grants to needy Brahmins and was in charge of all charitable endowments.
- (viii) The *nyāyadhīsh* or chief-justice—He was the highest judicial authority in both civil and criminal matters.

The council of ministers was a purely advisory body and the king was not bound by their advice. Policies were laid down by the king himself and the ministers carried them out and advised him regarding the details. In constituting such a body of advisers Shivājī was following the model of the Muslim Sultānates known to him. The ministers were the king's subordinates and functioned at his will. They did not have the compelling authority possessed by the cabinet in the parliamentary governments.

The Secretaries

The secretaries had almost as much importance as the ministers. The *chiṭnis* wrote replies to all diplomatic letters and attended to the king's personal correspondence. He also conveyed the decisions of the state's highest judiciary. The *munshi* was the Persian secretary. He was in charge of the state correspondence.

Provincial Administration

The kingdom was divided into provinces. There were four provinces at the time of Shivājī's death. Each province was under a viceroy (*deshadhikāri*) who was assisted by a staff of eight officers. The provinces were sub-divided into *parganās* and these into *tarfs*. The *tarfs* were divided into villages. The *tarfs* were under the administrative control of a *havalḍār*. In the villages the collection of revenue was entrusted to the *patel* and accounts were kept by *kulkarni*.

The District Administration

Those territories of Mahārāshtra which formed Shivājī's independent kingdom were popularly known as *swarājya*. In these the overall supervision was that of three of his competent ministers. The actual administration was of district officers called *subāhdārs* or *havaldārs*. The *havaldār* was in charge of a revenue division each yielding about 5,000 *huns*⁴⁶. Two such revenue divisions made a *prānt* which was governed by a *subāhdār*. *Swarājya* was divided thus, into a number of *prānts* or districts, which in Shivājī's time were fourteen.

A *subāhdār* got four hundred *huns* per year, a *havaldar* half the amount. The main job of these officers was collection of land revenue and maintenance of law and order. They inspected crops, classified lands, and settled the revenue in the presence of farmers and village officers. A *subāhdār* was assisted by an accountant called *majumdār*, a letter-writer (*chiṭnis*), record-keeper (*daftardār*) and other clerks. These were appointed by the centre. The accountant was expected to be an expert in finance. He was paid about one-hundred and twenty-five *huns* per year.

After Shivājī, in the period of his successors the district administration underwent minor changes. The position of the *subāhdār* was taken by the *māmlatdār*. His subordinate or deputy known as *kāmavisdār* administered a smaller area. Both of them were directly answerable to the central government at Pune (old Poona) except in the case of some districts where a superior officer known as the *sarsubāhdar* was placed as a link in between. The *māmlatādār* and *kāmavisdār* were responsible for all the branches of the district administration, like agriculture, industry, police and justice. They were also in charge of the militia, which they could use for realising the revenue in case of opposition.

It must not be supposed, however, that the *māmlatdār* had unrestrained power. The Marathās seem to have imbibed and adopted the Mughal device of checks and balances. Officers were appointed by the centre to keep a watch on them and as a

46 A hundred rupees are equivalent to 33 1/3 *huns*.

check to their power⁴⁷. The accounts of the *māmlatdār* were not accepted by the central authority unless they were checked by hereditary *zamindārs* who were their agents and by the *darakhdārs*—who again were specially put in the districts for supervising the accounts. In case of dispute between the *māmlatdārs* and the checking officers, reliance was placed on the records of the *deshmukh*, though often these too were not very accurate.

Village Administration

The *patel*, *kulkarni* and *chaugula* collected the revenue from villages and sent it to the district authorities. Minor disputes were settled by them and they carried out all the important work of the village like the digging of wells for water, maintenance of temples, holding of fairs and so forth. Shivājī did away with the intermediaries like the *deshmukhs* and *deshpāndes*, and dealt directly with the farmers. This removed a lot of oppression, for these persons collected almost ten times of what they deposited in the government treasury. He also abolished many vexations cesses, and relieved the cultivators' burden. This increased their prosperity, and they gladly gave him their loyalty.

Under Shivājī's successors the village administration remained almost the same as before. The *patel* was the most powerful village official. He was magistrate, revenue and police officer, and judge, all in one. Though appointed by the government, the office was in practice hereditary. He was paid by being assigned rent-free land and receipts from every villager of a fixed share of his produce. Thus the emoluments varied slightly from village to village. The *kulkarni*, who was the village clerk and record-keeper, and always a Brahmin, shared with the *patel* his responsibility to keep peace in the village. The *patel's* duties were multifarious. He allotted land, collected revenue, promoted agriculture and carried out the executive orders of the government. He also made known to the government the problems of the village folk. He was more or less like

47 These were eight number viz., the *dīwan*, *muzumdār*, *phadnis*, *daftardār*, *points*, *sabhāsad chitnis*, and the *māmlatdār's* deputy.

the present day *lekhpāl* except that the mode of payment of his salary was different and he had considerably greater power in the village. Another official was the *mahār* or village watchman. He knew the field boundaries, kept an eye on all those who passed through the village and was on the look-out for thieves and men of ill repute. He provided escort for the government treasure. For solving the community problems a board of twelve artisans or village servants known as *bārā balute* or *bārā alute* were appointed. They were remunerated by a share of the crops and other perquisites.

Revenue and Taxation

Shivājī tried to establish one common system for collection of revenue. He revived the principles of Malik Ambar and got the land surveyed by the *kaṭhi* or measuring rod which was five cubits and five fists in length.⁴⁸

Several land surveys were made. The first was by Dādāji Kondadeo, the second by Mōre Pant Pinglé, and the last one by Anṇāji Datto which covered most of the Marāthā districts. The principles followed by him were the same as the ones adopted by Malik Ambar, namely : (i) the classification of land according to fertility (ii) ascertainment of the produce (iii) fixing the government's share (iv) collection of rents in kind or cash (v) abolition of intermediaries as collecting agents and farmers of land revenue. The state claimed two-fifths share of the produce, but waste lands were excluded. By these steps the collection of revenue was made on a rational basis, and Shivājī kept the interest of the cultivators in mind. He stopped their exploitation by rapacious landlords. Grant Duff has all praise for Shivājī's revenue administration. 'The assessments' he says 'were made on the actual state of the crop ; the proportionate division of this was three-fifths to the ryot and two-fifths to the government. As soon as he got permanent possession of any territory, every species of military contribution was stopped ; all farming of revenue ceased, and the collections were made by agents appointed by himself. . . His revenue regulations were

48 Balkrishna, *Shivāji the Great*, Part IV, p. 108.

simple and judicious...Muslim writers and an English traveller, Fryer, describe his country as in the worst possible state, but this is probably due to prejudice. The districts directly under him experienced great benefits.⁴⁹

Apart from land revenue there were many other avenues of income also. These were customs, transit duties, judicial fees and fines, forest revenues, presents by subjects and officers, escheat and forfeitures, plunder and booty, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*, wealth from the capture of ships, monopolies and cesses. Of these *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* need to be explained. *Chauth* was the levy from enemy countries which Shivājī invaded, of roughly one-fourth of the estimated revenue. Rich people of the hostile territories were seized and forced to agree to such a payment. According to some views such a tribute had been levied even before Shivājī, and he was not its originator.⁵¹ But it was he who made it a regular practice and it formed a sizable portion of the state's income. He realised that no man can without the assistance of an army defeat the enemy. 'A wise king' he said, 'should, therefore, maintain an efficient fighting force. But this is not possible without having a great deal of money. So by my prowess I shall extract money from this earth, as Prathu is said to have milked it; the money on which the whole world depends.'⁵² The motive is undisguised. It was clearly a way to maintain the huge army which Shivājī found imperative for his conquest. *Chauth*, which was a fourth of the revenue of the conquered territory, yielded almost eighty *lakh huns* per year to the Marāthā treasury out of the total estimated annual income of a *crore huns*.⁵³ The levy was realised at the point of the sword. There was hardly any corresponding benefit to those who paid it, beyond a kind of tacit understanding that other aggressors would be kept off, and also that no more demands would be made. In this light it was not much

49 Grant Duff, *History of the Marathas* (1921), 1, p. 183.

50 Balkrishna, *Shivājī the Great*, part IV, p' 119.

21 Dr John Francis Gemalli Careri, *A Voyage Round the World* and S.N. Sen, *The Military System of the Marāthās*, p. 37.

52 *Shiva Bharat*: XXVIII. 30 to 40.

53 The figures are given by Sabhasad. The income from *chauth* was thus almost four-fifth of the total income.

different from blackmail, and much like payoff given to gangsters to keep away. Unfortunately none of the Marāthā kings bothered about consolidation. They just extracted the buy off money and filled their coffers with it. The payee domains had a choice between the Mughal marauders or the Marāthā ones. They found the latter the lesser evil. At least they had a limit. If they got their one-fourth they went contented and left the payees in peace till the next year. But Mughal plunder was loot without limit. They wouldn't leave even a wretched *dām* if they could lay their hands on it, and one never knew when he had seen the last of them.

Sardeshmukhi was ten per cent of the revenue. Its realisation from the conquered territory was just as arbitrary and unreasoned as *chauth*. Shivājī claimed to be the sole hereditary chief (*sar*) *deshmukh* of the Marāthā land. In that capacity he professed his right to one tenth of the land revenue as his personal maintenance as *sardeshmukh*. Gradually this came to be the collection charge of the land revenue paid to the state, a kind of collector's commission. But there was really no justification for charging this from the revenues of the conquered territories; for in these there was no systematic revenue collection as in the *swarājya* domain. Nevertheless Shivājī forced the people to pay. They could hardly dispute the point with the bands of armed Marāthā horsemen who came to get it along with *chauth*.

The huge amount of money obtained from all these avenues of taxation, which was about a *crore huns*, was spent by Shivājī not only on the maintenance of his army of 200,000 but also on other essential works. He appropriated nothing for himself. He did a lot for his soldiers, rewarding the brave among them with pensions bounties and prizes. He absorbed the sons of those who died into the state services, and gave pensions to their widows if there was none to support them. The wounded were compensated by adequate rewards. Gifts like bracelets, necklaces, horses and elephants were given to those who distinguished themselves. Civil officials were rewarded for good work. Shivājī built new forts and got the old ones repaired. Works of public utility like tanks, canals, buildings and so forth were undertaken. Nor was learning and culture ignored.

He gave presents to learned Brahmins and grants to temples. Thus Shivājī wisely and fruitfully spent the money he amassed for the people's good. In return they gave him their affection.

Justice

The Marāthā system of civil justice was simple. In case of a dispute the matter went up to the *patel*. He called a few village elders and they sat together to decide it. The village writer noted down a summary of the evidence. The *patel* or *māmlatdār* carried out the execution of the decision. If arbitration failed the case was transferred to a *panchāyat* appointed by the *patel* in the village and by the *shete mahājan* (a leading merchant) in urban areas. An appeal against the decision of the *panchāyat* lay to the *māmlatdār* who usually upheld the verdict unless it could be proved that the *panchāyat* was corrupt or prejudiced. In important suits an appeal could be made to the *peshwā* or to the law minister (the *nyāyādhis*).

There were some drawbacks in this system. Disposal took long, and there were delays. The members of the *panchāyat* often failed to come together. Once a decision was reached the absence of a proper machinery made its implementation difficult. Yet it was a rough and ready mode of justice. Being local in character it could reach closer to the truth than if the courts were far away. The *panchāyats* were popular institutions and generally their decisions satisfied the parties.

The *patel* was the police officer of the village as well. We have already seen that the village watchman (*mahā*) kept track of thieves and undesirable persons, and his resourcefulness was responsible for tracing out many crimes. The *māmlatdār* who supervised the headman kept a force at district headquarters. But this was more to check rebellion than to detect crime. The *kōtwāl* performed police duties in towns. Later the *peshwā*, Bājī Rāo, created a body of officials known as *tapāsnavis* who were much like our Criminal Investigation Department. Violent crimes were rare.

Punishments inflicted included confiscation of property, imprisonment, fines, flogging, mutilation, slavery, penal servitude, banishment, social boycott and execution. Adultery

was punished with penal servitude or mutilation in the case of women. Fines varied according to status. Treason, murder, dacoity and theft, were punishable by mutilation, and highway robbery by death. Women were never given the death penalty, and Brahmin offenders were starved or poisoned. Political prisoners were imprisoned and fettered, but ordinary ones were treated well and permitted to go home to perform their religious ceremonies. Sometimes the prisoners' relations were allowed to live with them and they were even fed at government expense.⁵⁴

Control by the Centre

Central control was exercised by keeping appointments of major executive officers with the central authority. This authority was represented by the *peshwā's* secretariate (*huzūr daftar*). There were several departments in the secretariate. Eliphinstone mentions two main departments viz. the *chālte daftar* and the *ek beriz daftar*. The *chālte daftar* was under the control of the *phadnis* and there were three branches: (a) the *phad* checked all accounts and kept a record of daily transactions, (b) the *beheda* framed budget estimates, (c) the *saranjāmi* department kept account of income from different lands. The *ek beriz daftar* kept the classified accounts of all departments. It also framed the total receipts and expenditure and the balance of the income in the year (known as *tarjumā*) and the abstracts of all expenditure (*khataunīs*). During the administration of the *peshwā*, Bājī Rāo II, the *huzūr daftar* lost its importance because the revenues of the entire provinces were farmed out.⁵⁵

Military Organisation

The infantry was the backbone of Shivājī's army in the beginning. Their arms consisted of swords, shields, daggers, poniards, rapiers, spears, bows and arrows and matchlocks. The men

54 Tone, *Institutions of the Marāthā People*, pp. 15-16.

55 appendix to Eliphinstone's Report Quoted in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, vol. VIII, 1977, pp. 557-8.

brought their own arms. The government gave them only the ammunition. Over every ten men there was a *nāik*, over every hundred a *jumlādār*, and over every thousand a *hazārī*. Over the *hazārīs* there was a *sarnobat* who commanded 7,000 infantry. The regular pay of the infantry was from four to twelve rupees a month. The *jumlādār* got about a hundred rupees a month. There were 1,00,000 foot soldiers in Shivājī's army and the same number of cavalry. Later on the Marāthā king realised the necessity of an efficient cavalry, and reorganised it. The lowest cavalry unit was of twenty-five troops in charge of a *havalddār*. Over five *havalddārs* there was one *jumlādār*, and over ten *jumlādārs* one *hazārī*. Of higher ranks were the *pāñch hazārī*, and the *sarnobat*, the latter being the supreme commander of the cavalry. Apart from the regular cavalry another branch of it were organised on a slightly different pattern, though they were under the *sarnobat*. They brought their own horses and arms. A *hazārī* was paid a thousand *huns* a year, a *pāñch hazārī* two thousand.

The Marāthā armies were extremely mobile and, avoiding a pitched battle, would harass the enemy and cut off its supplies. The result was devastating on Mughal armies which moved slowly and ponderously with heavy camps and equipage and an overwhelmingly large number of non-combatants. But they neglected artillery and relied for it on European officers. If the Marāthās had developed their own artillery and kept abreast in scientific innovations in war, they might have been able to face the Britishers more successfully. Their borrowed European officers were good enough when the conflict was with the Mughals. But 'blood is thicker than water'; and when the Marāthās were pitched against the English, they could no longer be relied upon. Once they encountered a foe with the capability of checking their swift attacks and preventing their sudden withdrawals, it took the edge off their fighting power. Imprisoned in the maze of death-dealing European artillery, they were caught in their tracks. It was not lack of courage. The valour of Mughal or European troops was not a patch on theirs. But a bullet kills a brave man just as surely as a coward. They were out matched with weapons greatly superior. And they realised it; but alas, too late.

The Role of Forts

Forts played a vital role in Shivājī's conquests. He used them as bases from which he would surprise the Mughal army, and to which he could retire after a devastating sally. It was essential that his forts should be strong points of offence and defence. He strengthened them with masonry walls and bastions parapets, moats and impregnable gateways. A circle of forts were built from Ahiwant to the banks of the Kāveri, and these made it possible for Shivājī to wage a continual war with the Mughals. There were 240 such forts in all.

The *havalddār* was the head of the garrison and kept the keys. It was his job to lock the gates at night and to open them in the morning. The *sabnis* was in-charge of the accounts and the *kārkhānis* of the commissariat.⁵⁶ All letters were drafted by the *sabnis*, signed by the *havalddār* and entered in the register by the *kārkhānis*. In bigger forts *taṭ-sarnobats* kept watch on the walls at night. The garrison had swords, spears, matchlocks and muskets. Some forts had cannon, but the Marāthās got most of their heavy firearms and the gunpowder for them from abroad. This was a great drawback. Stones were heaped on the ramparts, so that they could be dropped on the besiegers when they tried to escalate the fort. The utility of forts was diminished in the latter half of the eighteenth century when mortars, firearms and long range artillery, came to be used.

The Maratha Navy

Having extended his domain to the coastal districts, Shivājī felt the need of a navy to protect his towns from assaults by the enemy. But he was busy with the Mughals and the Ādil Shāhī kingdom most of the time, and could not devote much attention to it. According to Marāthā chronicles Shivājī's navy had seven hundred vessels of many kinds and sizes, such as *ghurabs*, *tarandis*, *tarambes*, *gallivats*, *shibars*, *pagars*, *machwas* and so forth. They were formed into two squadrons of two

56 Usually the *havalddār* was a Marāthā of a good family, the *Sabnis* a reliable Brahmin, and the *kārkhānis* a Prabhu.

hundred vessels each, commanded by two admirals who had the title *daryā sārang* and *mai naik*. English factory records put the number of the Marāthā ships as sixty-nine only.

Merits and Failings of the Maratha Administration

Shivājī created order from chaos and out of a band of warring chiefs, built a nation. Unfortunately he did not have worthy enough successors. Besides he could not possibly have eradicated the deeply ingrained caste prejudices among his people, and the personal jealousies which surfaced after him and became dominant in the times of the *peshwās*. Some authorities are of the view that the Marāthā organisation was not caste-ridden. Sardesai, for example, says, 'In fact the Marāthā regime was particularly welcome as affording plenty of field for all and every person in the land, to show one's worth, whatever caste or rank in society one might have belonged to.'⁵⁷ Nevertheless caste was of certain a factor to be reckoned with. Of the eight ministers in Shivājī's *Pradhān Maṇḍal* (Council of Ministers, six were Brahmins. Among the officers in charge of forts the *sabnis* had to be a Brahmin.

More damaging was the lack of organisation in Marāthā administration, as Sardesai points out. 'They had,' he says, on unity of command, no distribution of work, and power, no clear-cut assignment of duties, no method, no system, no rule.'⁵⁸ Perhaps the condemnation is too drastic. Shivājī evolved an administrative system within a surprisingly short time, and he did it from scratch. The modern cabinet, though greatly differing in nature and authority, is in essence a council of prominent ministers. The present day Indian *patwāri*, or *lekhpāl* as he is now called, is much like the Marāthā *patel*. In fact in hill districts the *patwāri* had police powers too, as Shivājī's *patel* had. The Marāthā administration went wrong in implementation, not in organisation it was, as Sardesai says,

57 Govind Sakhambar Sardesai, *The Main Current of Marāthā History*, Phoenix, 1926, p. 178.

58 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

'each one pulling independently.'⁵⁹ And this is a fault we can't claim is absent from the Indian administration even today.

Much more serious a defect was the Marāthā practice of conquest without consolidation. The forcible realisation of *chauth* resulted in annual expeditions in which the army devastated the country-side through which it marched, making it poorer and causing untold suffering. Outside Mahārāshtra, the Marāthās earned nothing but hatred. The only gain was the *chauth* money they realised. It was hardly conquest.

The Marāthās shared the Indian failing to stick on to old methods of management and administration.⁶⁰ Nowhere did this have a more devastating effect than in the army. As Sardesai points out, there was utter neglect of the study of science and of military training and organisation.⁶¹ The Marāthās did not care to maintain a strong naval force which was essential to fight the European powers on the sea-coast. Nor did they learn to manufacture essential articles like guns, telescopes clocks and the like. They had no naval arsenals or ship-building bases.

Another grave shortcoming was the absence of an efficient spy system or organisation for gathering information, such as the British had. This placed them at a distinct disadvantage.

If the Marāthās had extended their administrative organisation to their conquered territories as also to the *swarājya* ones perhaps they would have had a better chance to establish the empire of which Shivāji dreamt.

Another ill that attended the Marāthā empire was the one which is sure to overtake all despotisms which tend to dissipate the central authority. The same thing happened to the Sultānate and to the mighty Mughal empire. The Bahmanī empire broke up because of it into a number of warring units. The *peshwās* became virtual kings. Other officers resented their

59 *Ibid.*

60 This failing persists even now. It is more than thirty years that the British left, the pattern of administration from the *Patwāri* to the commissioner (apart from the Indianisation of names) remains as it was then.

61 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

superiority. The weakening of the central authority made the feudal chiefs so powerful that the British could exploit the situation and make separate treaties with them. The ministers became overlords. Pockets of authority were established, and the Marāthā kingdom was split up into hundreds of chieftainships. Shivājī's work of unification was completely undone.

The financial position was none too good. Shivājī had organised it well and had left it sound. His successors spent recklessly. Despite heavy taxation the treasury remained empty. Bankers refused loans. The rivers of gold Bālājī Rāo lamented, 'only serve to enrich the army leaders. They disappear before they reach the Marāthā country.' The *peshwā's* debts between the years 1740 and 1760 were a *crore* and a half rupees. At the death of *peshwā* Mādhav Rāo there was a debt of twenty-four *lakhs*. The *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* dues could never be realised regularly. When the Marāthā armies moved in those who came in its clutches paid up. Others didn't. When the soldiers went back everyone breathed a sigh of relief and the levy was forgotten. There were more promises than actual payment. And of what was realised, little reached the treasury. Such a chaotic economy could hardly keep the nation alive for long.

Hindu empires have always been wrecked by disunity. If their leaders and generals had as much national sense as valour they might have lasted longer. It was so with the Rājputs. Manucci noted that had they combined, no power on earth could have ousted them. But they did not come together. It was the same with the Marāthās. Faced with British aggression in the second Marāthā war the rājās of Nagpur and Sindiya, vainly sought Yashvant Rāo's help. After their defeat, when British went on to attack the Rāo he could only helplessly censure in others, what he lacked himself. 'The ruin of our empire and religion', he wrote piteously, 'cannot be prevented unless we all unite and work together'. It was a pious thought, but came a little too late.

Administration of the Muslim Kingdoms

The administrative systems of the Muslim Kingdoms—the

Bahmanī empire, the Afghān Sultānate of Bengal, Ahmadnagar and the Nizām Shāhī kingdom—were more or less on the Mughal pattern.

Bahmani Administration

The Bahmanī kings were strong rulers. There were few internal rebellions in their reigns. Unfortunately their main concern was war, which, as often as not, was with the neighbouring Hindu empire of Vijayanagara. Drink was their vice. As a result in the long run they became slaves to wine and neglected affairs of state. Their rule was severe, but not oppressive. Attention was paid to the peasants. Irrigation works were undertaken. Under Mahmūd Gāwān the able prime-minister of Muhammad Shāh III a regular system of land revenue was introduced in which payment in money was made instead of in kind. Athanasius Nikitin, a Russian traveller who came to the Deccan between 1470 and 1474, has left us an account of the conditions existing in the Bahmanī Kingdom. His reaction was a mixed one. He has praise for the good roads and safety of travelling. 'There are villages every two miles' he says. 'The land is well laid out in the fields and well tilled; the roads well policed, and travelling secure.' But he noticed that the gap between the rich and the poor was very wide. 'The country is over stocked' he says, 'and the poverty of the common folk contrasts to sharply with the luxury of the nobles. The latter go about in silver litters, with immense retinues of richly dressed retainers'. The Bahmanī Sultāns generally did not admit Hindus to high offices and discouraged education being imparted to them. Thus their state was purely an Islāmic one. Succession among the Bahmanī kings was hereditary. The Sultān was the head. He considered himself as the agent of the caliph. He was the commander-in-chief of the army and the highest court of justice. The Sultāns maintained grand courts but there were frequent dissensions in them because of the two rival factions, the Deccānis who were orthodox Sunnīs, and the foreigners who were Shiāhs.

The king was assisted by a council of eight ministers. The chief-minister was called the *Wakil-us-Sultanate*, the

minister for finance *amīr-i-jumlā* the minister for external *wazīr-i-ashraf*, and the *peshawa* the affairs *wazīr-i-kul*. The *sadr-i-jāhān* (chief-justice) was also in charge of religious matters and charitable endowments.

The kingdom was divided into four provinces—Gulbargā, Daulatābād, Berūr and Bīdar. Each one of these was under a governor (*tarafdār*). He collected the revenue, looked after the army and commanded it, and made civil and military appointments in his province. The provincial governors were known by their titles—*musnad-i-āli*, *majlis-i-āli*, *azam-i-Humāyūn* and *malik nāib*. They could be transferred from one province to another. The provinces were divided into *sarkārs* and subdivided into *parganās*. A *parganā*, which was the smallest unit of administration, consisted of a number of villages.

The army was elaborately organised. The king's body-guard had four reliefs, and was so managed the one was always on duty.

The Bengal Sultānate—The Afghān Sultānate of Bengal came into existence at the time of Shar Shāh and lasted till 1576 when the last ruler, Daud Karrami, was defeated by one of Akbar's generals. The king was the head of administration. Succession was hereditary, but the Afghān nobles had much influence in choosing a ruler. The prime-minister was known as *vakil*. Next to him was the finance minister (*wazīr*). The *āriz-i-māmalik* was the minister in charge of military establishments. There was a commander-in-chief of the army. Small areas within the kingdom were governed by Afghān tribal *zamindārs*.

The Administration of Ahmadnagar

Ahmadnagar came into existence in the year 1538 after the disintegration of the Bahmanī kingdom. The king was the supreme head. Succession was hereditary, but the nobles often nominated a ruler. There was a council of ministers. The king decided how many ministers would there be and on what terms. The prime minister, who supervised the general administration, was known as the *peshwā*. The finance minister (*wazīr*) looked after revenue and expenditure. He was helped

by the *dīwān*, who was in the Ahmadnagar administration a minor functionary much different from the powerful Mughal *dīwān*. Other important departments were law and justice, public works, endowments and trusts and the mint. There were political and military departments also.

The Nizam Shahi Kingdoms

These kingdoms extended 'over a greater part of Berār, the subsequent *sūbah* of Aurangābad, Jalna and some other districts of Nāsik and Khāndesh and the districts of Kalyān in the Konkan from Bankot to Bassein.' The kingdom was divided into four provinces, each under a governor who was the king's representative and the executive, judicial and military head. Each province was sub-divided into districts (*sarkārs*) and every district had a *faujdār*, a *qāzī*, a *Kōtwāl*, a treasurer and a revenue collector. The districts were divided into *parganās* (also known as *prānts* and *deshas*). The revenue was collected by hereditary officers known as *despāndes* who looked after the administration also. Village affairs were looked after by the *panchayāt*.

Law and Legal Institutions

From 1000 to 1300

There were important developments in this period which falls between the downfall of the Hindu empire and the coming of the Turkish kings. Immediately before the beginning of the eleventh century there were three important jurists viz. Jitendriya Bālaka and Yogloka. The views of Jitendriya were as follows:

1. What one acquires on his own without the means and material owned jointly by the members of his family, is his exclusive property.
2. The widow shall succeed to the property of her deceased husband whether he was separated or was a member of the joint family at the time of his death.
3. The daughter's son shall succeed immediately after the daughter. Bālaka and Yogloka had a novel view about adverse possession. They held that adverse possession of movables for ten years and immovables for twenty years when the owner was present but took no steps to assert his rights, entailed loss of title.

The prominent jurists in the eleventh century were Jīmūtavāhana, the distinguished author of the *Dāyabhāga* digest, Vijñāneshvara the commentator on the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛiti*, Kullūka

and Govindarāja the well-known commentators of the *Manu-Smṛiti*, Dhāreshvara and Lokshmīdhara, Aparāka, the commentator of the *Yājñavalkya-Smṛiti*, and Devaṇṇabhaṭṭa, the author of a well-known digest.

Jīmūtavāhana's *Vyavahāra-mātrikā* covers a wide range of subjects. It makes a kind of distinction between criminal and civil law. Of the eighteen titles of law, says the author, fourteen concern wealth, and the remaining four have their roots in injury (*hiṃsā*). Jīmūtavāhana's main views on jurisprudence as contained in *Vyavahāramātrikā* are as follows:

1. Judicial proceedings must conform to the *dharmashāstra* and *arthaśāstra*. Where the two are at variance *dharmashāstra* must prevail. Where the *dharmashāstras* themselves are at variance, popular usage based on reason should decide the issue.
2. Punishment was to be given to a judge who took bribes or gave unjust decisions, and to those who spoke secretly to any of the parties while their case was going on.
3. The king himself should deal with serious offences, as for example a *guru* punishing his pupil too severely, a father intent on squandering his property on women and the like, or the selling away of an only son by his father or of a virtuous wife by her husband.
4. Among the proofs of possession, documents, witnesses, and inference, each preceding one is more important than the one immediately following; where even inference is wanting recourse may be had to ordeal.
5. Possession for three generations is not to be disturbed if it was successive.

In the *Dāyābhāga*, Jīmūtavāhana deals with ownership, partition and inheritance. These are as follows:

1. Ownership is that which the *śāstrās* (scriptures) indicate.
2. The owner of a property can dispose of it just as he chooses. For example though some texts say that a

father ought to take the consent of his sons in disposing of his property, this is really not necessary, for the father owns it.

3. Once a gift is made ownership is transferred, even if the gift is not accepted. But the donee cannot take benefit from the property unless he gives his acceptance.
4. Ownership in the case of sons arises only after the death of the father or on his becoming a mendicant.
5. Rights of those in whose favour property is partitioned accrue only after the partition.
6. In Succession Jīmūtavāhana, following a famous text of Manu,¹ acknowledges the claim of a kinsman belonging to the family of the deceased but of a different male descent, like his own daughter's son or his father's daughter's son, or belonging to a different family like his maternal uncle. These are *sapiṇḍas* because they make offerings to the three ancestors in the paternal and maternal line. Thus on the principal of superior religious efficacy the daughter's son and other cognates frequently have better claim than very near *sapiṇḍas* in the male line.
7. Regarding *strīdhana* (the wife's share; *strī*=women, *dhana*=wealth or property) Jīmūtavāhana says it is that which a woman is entitled to give, sell or enjoy independently, of her husband. Such property devolves equally on the sons and the unmarried daughter.

Dhāreshvara is generally in agreement with Vijñāneshvara, the leading jurist of south India in most of his views.

1. Ownership stems, he says from the injunctions of the *śāstras*, not according to worldly recognition.
2. Sons have no ownership in the father's property during his life time. Their rights accrue only after partition.

1 "To three ancestors water must be offered, to three the funeral cake is given, the fourth descendant is the giver of these oblations, the fifth has no connection with them. Always to that relation within three degrees who is nearest to the deceased *sapiṇḍa* the estate shall belong; afterwards a *sakulya* shall be the heir, then the spiritual teacher of the pupil". *Manusmṛiti* IX, 186-7 Translation Bühler.

3. If the father partitions the property in his life time he must give the sons equal shares.
4. The daughter's son succeeds immediately after the daughter. On two points, however, Dhāreshvara differs from Vijñāneshvara.
 1. A widow he says, is entitled to inherit her husband's property provided he was separated at the time of his death and she is willing to support his issue.
 2. The father's mother shall take the property in preference to the father.

Vijñāneshvara is the great jurist of south India. His views on various aspects of law and justice are as follows:

1. *Judges and courts*—The judges, whom the king appoints, are he says, to blame if they do not dissuade him from acting unjustly. But the Brahmins, who are not appointed by the king, commit wrong only if they speak a falsehood or if they withhold their counsel when they should give it. Although he says Brahmins should preferably be appointed judges, they are still to pay a fine for wilfully giving unjust decisions. A few merchants should, according to him, also be associated with courts for the people's satisfaction. Higher courts are entitled to hear appeals from the one immediately lower.
2. *Judicial procedure*—The plaint shall be written twice. The first time is when it is filed. In this the cause of action alone finds place. It is written again in the presence of the defendant. The year, months etc. is then set forth. The plaint can be revised and corrected only till the defendant's answer has not been filed, otherwise the proceeding may never come to an end. If the plaintiff makes unauthorised changes in the plaint he is liable to be punished. If he makes a false statement in a case involving an act of violence, he loses his claim.
3. *Ownership*—The orthodox view that ownership proceeds from scriptural injunction is contradicted by

Vijñāneshvara. He holds is deduced from wordly transactions.² Ownership of persons who have a right to a property exists in it even before it is partitioned.

4. *Transfer of ownership*—A gift implies transfer of ownership from one to the other only if the other person accepts it as his own. In the case of movable property such acceptance may be mental, verbal and physical. But where immovable property is concerned there must be possession for some time.
5. *Possession and title—Adverse possession*—Ordinarily mere possession does not preclude an inquiry into title. But when it is of long standing, 'when the origin of possession is lost in obscurity by reason of its having commenced beyond living human recollection', title is presumed. Vijñāneshvara disagrees with Bālaka and Yoglaka in regard to adverse possession. He gives a different interpretation to Yajñavalkya's famous texts in this behalf that 'he who sees his land enjoyed by another for twenty years or his money for ten years without asserting his right, loses them'. The loss referred to in the text means, according to him, loss during adverse possession of profit of the land and of the wealth, not loss of the wealth and land itself.
6. *Partition and inheritance*—(a) Some relations acquire ownership at the moment of their birth and in fact become co-owners in the property. (b) A son has right to his father's acquired property as well as to the ancestral one. (c) In ancestral property all sons have an equal share, but in acquired property this may not be sold in regard to co-ownership the view of jurist is 'a *dāyabhāga* co-parcener holds the property in quasi-severalty as if he was a tenant-in-common, whereas a *mitāksharā* co-parcener holds the entire property and every part of it as if he was a joint tenant.'³

2 This is also the view of renowned authorities Prabhākara, Kumārila and Pārthasārathi Misha.

3 *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1957, vol. V, p. 293, *op. cit.*

7. *Succession*—(a) Relations through males have a preferential right over relations through females, except the daughter's son who comes just after the daughter and before the parents. (b) The unmarried daughter has a better claim than the married one; the unprovided a better claim than the endowed. (c) A widow who has no son succeeds to all her husband's property even if he died separate, provided she has not remarried. (d) The daughter's son succeeds immediately after the daughter and before the mother and the father. (e) The mother succeeds before the father.
8. *Strīdhana*—(a) This according to Vijñāneshvara includes property acquired by a woman by inheritance, purchase, partition, seizure or finding. (b) Daughters succeed equally to *strīdhana*, and on their failure sons are given the succession in the same manner. (c) The heirs for *strīdhana* which is given to a woman before the nuptial fire are in the following order: unmarried daughter, unendowed married daughter, endowed married daughter. (d) In case of the bridal price the heirs are the uterine brothers alone (e) The *strīdhana* of a childless woman, married according to the four approved forms goes to her husband, and that of one married after the four unapproved forms goes to her parents.

Another south Indian jurist is Aparārka, who however follows Jīmūtavāhana more than Vijñāneshvara. According to him adverse possession of immovable for twenty years and movables for ten years, when the owner does not assert his right, extinguishes his title. As regards succession Aparārka prefers the brother to the grandson and the great-grandson. In regard to the claims of the parents, the father, he believes, succeeds before the mother.

Devanṇabhaṭṭa, another prominent jurist of the south, wrote his digest *Smṛiti-chandrikā*. According to him ownership is based on worldly transactions. His views on other subjects are:

1. The sons acquire by very birth ownership in ancestral property.

2. A father should not distribute his property unequally between his sons.
3. A daughter having sons is to be preferred to one who is sonless as regards succession.
- 4 As regards parents, both the father and the mother should succeed together.

IN THE SULTANATE

Sources of Muslim Law

Muslim polity is based on the concept of *shar* or Islāmic law. This has four sources, the *Qurān*, *sunnah*, *ijmā* and *qiyās*.

The *Qurān* or *al-Kitāb* contains the revelations of Mohammad. In the early days these were transmitted by memory. Caliph Abū Bakr got a written text made with the help of Zaid bin Sābit and a commission appointed by the caliph to help him. The final recession of the *Qurān* was produced by 'Usmān twenty-five years after the prophet's death. The *Qurān* indicates what is right conduct and what is wrong. The injunctions of the *Qurān* have authority over all other sources of law.

The *sunnah* or tradition is the 'storehouse of material for the life of the Prophet and of Muslim institutions'.⁴ The *sunnahs* of Mohammad comprising his deeds and utterances are known as the *hadīs*. The Prophet was believed to be best interpreter of the *Qurān* and his sayings and acts are taken to be the soul of Islāmic law. Wherever the *Qurān* does not contain a clear injunction the help of the *hadīs* is sought.

The third source of Muslim law is *ijmā* which literally means 'agreeing upon'. After the Prophet's death the learned among Muslims (the *mujtahids*), formed a body of opinion which was taken recourse to in settling disputes. Important sections of Muslim law were based on these opinions and *ijmā*, therefore, became the major source of Islāmic law.

The fourth source of law is the *qiyās*. *Al-qiyās* literally means 'to compare'. It is, therefore, deduction by analogy. It comes into use in cases which the *Qurān*, *Sunnah* and *ijmā*, all are silent,

⁴ *Muslim Institutions*, p. 66.

and so it is not so authoritative as these. While the 'Qurān is the word of Allāh, *qiyās* is the work of feeble intelligence.⁵

Schools of Islamic Law

Islāmic jurisprudence called *fiqh* (meaning 'intelligence' and 'knowledge'), includes criminal law, the administration of the state, and the conduct of war. Discussion and interpretation have been greatly instrumental in giving shapes to Islāmic law. These have led to the formation of various schools. The Shiās and Khārijīs had their own schools. Orthodox Islām or Sunnism evolved four main schools—the Hanafī, Shāfi'ī, Mālikī and the Hanbalī.

The Hanafī school gets its name from Imām Abū Hanīfa (700-770). He was a great scholar, logician and spokesman of the Sunnī sect. His renowned disciples were Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Mohammad bin Shaibāni. His doctrines are largely followed in India, Turkey and Central Asia. The Shāfi'ī sect was founded by Mohammad bin Idris al-Shāfi'ī (767-820), who was remotely connected with the Prophet. He did much to systematise Islāmic law. The Shāfi'ī teaching is popular in south Arabia, Bahrain, Malay east *Africa* and parts of Central Asia. The Mālikī school is named after Mālik bin Anas (710-795) whose fame rests chiefly on his *Muwatṭa'*. This is replete with religious and moral ideas. The Islāmic legal system was greatly developed by Mālik and became authoritative in Medīna. Its essence is compromise. The Hanbalī school gets its name from Ahmad bin Mohammad bin Hanbal (born 780) at Baghdād. His main work was the *Musnad* which acquired great fame. This encyclopaedia of traditions has about 30,000 rulings. It was compiled with the help of his son, 'Abd Allāh who also joined him in another work known as *Kitāb al-zuhd*. Hanbal followed largely the traditional sources of law. His school was prominent till the fourteenth century. The rise of the Ottomen power marked its decline.

The Indo-Muslim Legal Tradition

Sayyid Nūr-ud-dīn Mubārik of Ghaznī was highly regarded by Sultan Muhammad Ghuri. He wished Iltutmish to deal harshly with all non-Muslims. He was such a crusader against heresy that he forbade even a study of philosophy. Qāzī Minhaj-us-Sirāj who held the office of *qāzī*, and lived in the age of Iltutmish, was more liberal. He favoured the *sama* (ecstatic) dances of dervishes, and was quite unorthodox. Balban gave the *ulamā* short shrift. As Barnī says he would order whatever he considered to be in the interest of the realm whether it was or was not sanctioned by Islāmic law'. This realistic approach was continued by Sadr-ud-dīn Ārif, Minhaj's daughter's son, who worked as deputy to the chief *qāzī* for a long time in 'Alā-dīn Khaljī's reign. He was strong officer who kept down swindling, deception and trickery. Maulānā Burhan-ud-dīn brought with him the great legal treatise the *Hidaya* from Balkh. This became the basis of Muslim law. The Maulānā was a great scholar and teacher, highly respected by Balban. He too was of liberal views and favoured the ecstatic dances which he wanted to see again and again.

In law, Muslim India followed greatly the tradition of Central Asia. A number of law books brought from there in Balban's reign were in Arabic. Firūz Tughluq got Persian translations made. A greatly comprehensive digest was the *Fātawa-i-Tatār Khānia* named after a pious nobleman, Tatār Khān. A summary of this was prepared by Shaikh Ibrāhīm the Imām of the mosque of the Ottoman Sultān, Mohammad, in Istanbul. Prior to the *Fātawa-i-Ālamagirī* in Aurangzīb's reign the *Fātawa-i-Tatār Khānia* remained the most authoritative digest of Muslim law.

The Law as Applying to non-Muslims

It has already been mentioned that non-Muslims were made to pay a poll tax (*jizyā*) for living in a Muslim state. Whatever the Islāmic principles were in relation to this, in actual practice it was levied by almost all Muslim rulers in order to provide them with money to maintain their large armies and for other expenses of the empire. Its payment neither ensured any

freedom from oppression, nor even any religious liberty. Ziyā ud-dīn Barnī, the chronicler of the Tughluq emperors makes this clear beyond any possible doubt. He says 'should the kings consider the payment of a few *tankās* by way of *jizyā* as sufficient justification for their allowing all possible freedom to the *infidels* to observe and demonstrate all orders and details of infidelity, to read the misleading literature of their faith and to propagate their teachings, how could the true religion get the upper hand over other religions and how could the emblems of Islām be held high?' The *Qurān* says the Muslims should 'fight those who do not profess the true faith, till they pay *jizyā* with the hand in humility.'⁶ The tax was thus a kind of penalty for living in a Muslim state; and it was realised in a manner which was calculated to make the payers thoroughly realise their humble position in such a state.

The personal law of Islām covering parts of the *shar*, which prescribed the religious duties of Muslims did not apply to the non-Muslim subjects. The *zimmīs* or non-Muslims could also have the option to be tried by their personal law in civil matters like inheritance, succession and so forth. If they chose, however, they were free to take the matter to the Muslim court. It was then the judge's duty to take the advice of men learned in the personal law of the litigants. In criminal matters the Islāmic criminal code applied equally to Muslims and non-Muslims. But where it came into conflict with the moral notions of the *zimmīs*, concessions were made. For example, though *satī* was a kind of suicide, it was permitted for Hindu women provided there was no coercion and the government's previous consent had been obtained. Punishment's for transgression of the Islāmic code in matters relating to respect for it was somewhat less rigorous for non-Muslims.

The Law Courts

Four types of courts were recognised. The *dīwān-i-mazālim* was the one where major complaints were filed. It was presided over by the ruler or his representative. The *qāzī's* court

⁶ *Qurān*, IX, 29.

administered the Islamic law. The court of the *muhtasib* or censor dealt with matters relating to public morals and religious offences. Finally there were the police courts known as the *shurtas*.

The most important judicial functionary was the *amīr-i-dād* or chief magistrate. He got a high salary and was usually a noble or a member of the royal family, known for piety and learning. He held courts for the Sultān during his absence, controlled the police, carried out public works including maintenance of the city walls, kept copies of documents registered with the *qāzī* and forbade covenants which transgressed the law. He referred back cases to the *qāzī* where he felt there was miscarriage of justice and issued stay orders. He dealt with breaches of law, got criminals arrested and often asked a *qāzī* to help him with advice in judicial matters.

The chief-judge was known as the *qāzī-i-mumālīk*, and the office was combined with that of the *sadr-i-jahān* or head of the ecclesiastical department. The chief-judge was appointed directly by the Sultān, and was his legal adviser in matters relating to the Islāmic holy law. The *qāzīs* grew very important and powerful in the Sultānate. They were appointed by the central government, and so were completely independent of the provincial governors. The *qāzī*'s main job was to settle civil disputes among Muslims and to look after the property of infants and lunatics. Generally honest, pious and learned men got the post. The Sultāns wanted to maintain the dignity of their *qāzīs*. Some of them, like Muhammad Tughluq appeared before a *qāzī* without any pretensions, just to raise their esteem in the public eye. The result was the *qāzīs* were bold as well as enlightened. They acted fearlessly. Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī wanted Sayyid Maulā, who was accused of treason, to walk through fire in order to vindicate himself. The jurists did not agree for, as they rightly said, fire could not distinguish between the innocent and the guilty. The Sultān had to bow to their decision. When Mughis-ud-dīn, who was *qāzī* in the reign of 'Alā-un-dīn Khaljī criticised his king, he was even rewarded for his frank talk. The *qāzī*, however, held his office at the Sultān's pleasure, even though an honest and conscientious officer was never dismissed.

The *Kōtwāl's* functions have already been related. He was the head of the city police, and the court of first inquiry in criminal cases. He had a number of other functions as well; both civic like those performed by the modern municipal committee, and those for which the police are responsible. Capital punishment needed the monarch's assent. In villages the *Panchāyats* worked with marked success.

LAW AND JUSTICE UNDER THE MUGHALS

The Mughals could hardly govern India strictly in accordance with Islāmic law. Even the Muslim Sultāns of the Sultānate period had tried to do so without much success. It was inevitable that Islāmic law should undergo some changes in its applicability to a country other than that from which it originated. Of the four schools of Muslim law the one eminently suitable for such adaptation was the Hanafī. Imām Abū Hanīfa its founder did not use the traditions of the Prophet (*hadīs*) in evolving his legal system. This made it more flexible than others. He believed in studying actual conditions existing in a social order and applied the Qurānic spirit to solve problems arising from it. His school is, therefore, 'the most tolerant school of Islām.'⁷ It is said to possess 'greater power of creative adaptation than any other school of Mohammedan law.'⁸ Apart from its adaptability it was also the most thorough and meritorious. As a system of religio-judicial thought Von Kremer thinks it to be the 'highest and loftiest achievement of which Islām was capable.'⁹ Hanafī jurisprudence, therefore, became the reference book for Mughal judges. Digests were prepared. Aurangzib appointed a syndicate of theologians to prepare an Indian digest of Arabic lawgivers. The *Fatāwā-i-Ālamgirī* was compiled in Arabic at a cost of two *lakhs* of rupees. This was an authoritative work on Muslim law, polity and religious usage.

7 Hitti, *A History of the Arabs*, pp. 397-8.

8 *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, p. 398.

9 Mac Donald, *Development of Muslim Theology*, p. 99.

Changes in Islamic Law In Application to Non-Muslims

The Sultāns of Delhi in the period of the Sultānate (1206-1526) tried with varying success to enforce the Islamic principles of law in India. Most of them found it difficult to enforce an alien system of jurisprudence on a population consisting largely of Hindus whose law and culture was fundamentally different. Impartial justice was denied to them. Many lost their lives for criticising Islām or merely for refusing to recognise that it was superior to their own faith. Heads of infidels were hacked off for the greater glory of Islām. Their gods were reviled and their temples were pulled down. This continued during the reigns of the earlier Mughal emperors, Bābur, Humāyūn and Sher Shāh, who were too busy fighting their endless wars to make any changes, Akbar was the first medieval Muslim emperor who tried to make the law the same for all his subjects, whether Hindus or Muslims. He gave recognition to all religions and laid down that there should be no interference with anyone on account of his religion and that all persons could pursue their own. Hindus who had been forcibly converted to Islām could revert to Hinduism. Hindu women who were forcibly married to Mussalmāns could be restored to their families. Parents who had sold their children could buy them back from slavery when they had the money. The law imposing punishment of death for criticising the religion of Islām or the conduct of Prophet Muhammad, was repealed. Many other reforms were introduced by Akbar.¹⁰

It was Akbar alone of the Mughal emperors who did away with the ugly features of both Hindu and Muslim practices, and tried to evolve a common law for all. Polygamy, early marriages, marriage between near relations and circumcision of children of tender age among Muslims was prohibited. So too marriages between couples whose ages had great disparity. Hindu widows were permitted to marry and none could be forced to immolate herself on the funeral pyre. By making universal the good practices of all races and religions, Akbar tried to create an atmosphere of secularism. Slaughter of

¹⁰ See chapter on Akbar *ante*.

animals and manufacturing and drinking wine on certain days was prohibited. He married his sons with the daughters of Hindus without insisting, like other Muslim emperors, on converting the girls to Islām. Both Hindu and Muslim ceremonies were observed at these mixed marriages. Discriminations between the two communities in regard to levy of taxes were done away with. The *jizyā* was abolished.

Jahāngīr retained his father's reforms except some of them, like the marrying of Muslim girls by Hindus. The converse, namely marriage between Muslim men and Hindu women, he allowed. He also forbade forcible conversions to Islām. Shāh Jahān favoured conversions on Hindus to Islām and made apostasy from Islām a capital punishment. Blasphemy and the use of disrespectful language towards Islām was declared a crime.

Although Shāh's religious zeal cooled off towards the end of his reign, his bigoted son and successor, Aurangzīb undid all that Akbar had done to achieve a secular state. He was determined to make the Mughal empire an Islamic state. The Muslim law relating to circumcision, marriage, divorce and inheritance was restored. Hindu women could not marry without first being converted to Islām. The *jizyā* was reimposed. Hindus had to pay taxes at double the rates of Muslim taxpayers. Hindu temples and schools were pulled down. The later Mughals with their weaknesses and internal squabbles could not enforce the Islāmic law with an iron hand. The Muslim state struggled ineffectually with the new rivals, the Marāthās and the British, both non-Muslims. It was left to the British conquerors to frame a code of law which could have universal application once again, and which was free of religious compulsion or bias.

Criminal Law and Punishment

From modern standards punishments awarded under Muslim rule could only be termed barbarous. But in those distant times this was, the normal trend. Apart from capital punishment awarded for murder, fine and imprisonment are the normal modes of modern sentences for crime. In the age of Muslim

kings, however, imprisonment was mostly for political heads and leaders. Those whom the emperor wished to get assassinated in the long run unobtrusively, were, to start with, put into prison. Fines were levied chiefly as compensation to the injured party. The scope of settlement or compromise was much greater than now. Murder, for example, could be compounded by paying the next of kin of the victim adequate compensation. If they agreed to accept it, the charge was dropped. Another characteristic of Islāmic justice is that quite often punishment varied with status. Men of high rank were let off with a warning. Merchants were imprisoned. Common people were whipped. Religious discrimination was another principle of Muslim justice. For example if a Hindu murdered a Muslim he would be executed; while a Muslim was not to be put to death (unless he had done the deed treacherously) for murdering a person who was not a Muslim. Punishments included such barbarities as trampling to death under an elephant's feet, biting by a cobra, hurling the guilty person down from a roof, tearing to pieces by ferocious dogs, throwing the man to be devoured by hungry crocodiles, and so forth. Cutting off the limbs or tongue and gouging out the eyes were common, and often the fate of royal rebels.

Crimes were broadly classed under three heads (1) Offences against God (2) Offences against the state (3) Offences against private individuals. Offences against God consisted of insulting Islām or the Prophet. Such critics were put to death. For example in Shāh Jahān's reign a Hindu who was believed disrespectfully towards the Qurān was executed.¹¹ A Brahmin official who held the post of a *qanūngo* was beheaded because he was suspected of using disrespectful language for the Prophet.¹² According to the Hanafī school of law, women guilty of such a crime were imprisoned, not executed. But other schools made no such distinction. Offences against the state and those against private individuals were compoundable, of course, on agreement of the parties. Muhammad bin Tughluq, for example, had accidentally killed an

11 Qazvīnī, 445.

12 *Ādāb-i-Ālamgirī*, 101.

eminent Hindu's brother. The emperor appeared before the *qazī* and on the verdict being passed against him, compensated the Hindu. Punishment for murder varied greatly according to the status of the persons involved or merely on the emperor's sweet will. The death penalty was given to some, as for example to Jujhār Khān Bakshī, a prominent Gujarāt officer, slew one Changez Khān, and Akbar got him executed for it.¹³ A son of Rājā Bikramājī kept a Muslim woman as his mistress. Fearing he would be found out he killed her parents and buried them in his house. The crime being established Jahāngir ordered his tongue to be cut out. The punishment was carried out and the man imprisoned for life. He was fed at the same mess as the dog keepers and sweepers.¹⁴ On the other hand Adham Khān who had killed two girls whom he had abducted from the family of Bāz Bahādur was pardoned by Akbar out of regard for Māham Anaga.¹⁵ Aurangzīb pardoned the murderer of one Ahad Beg on the intercession of Prince Shāh 'Ālam.¹⁶ Fryer mentions that a rich Muslim merchant slew his wife with a baby when he found her in the arms of a lover; and he escaped with just a fine.¹⁷ These cases show that it was not necessary that all people were weighed equally in the scales of justice. Status, influence and royal caprice had much to do with the kind of punishment given.

Muslim law prescribes in theory four kinds of punishment—*hodd*, *tazir*, *qisas* and *tashhir*. *Hadd* means literally 'boundary', 'limit' or 'barrier', and it signifies the punishment which is prescribed in the *Qurān* or the *hadīs*. Being prescribed by canon law this cannot be altered. *Hadd* lays down precise punishments for crimes like adultery, fornication, theft, highway robbery, apostasy, drinking and so forth. Sexual relations between unmarried persons, for example, was punished by 100 lashes, adultery with 80, and drinking also with 80 lashes. A thief lost his right hand, a robber both his hands and feet. *Tazir*

13 *Akbar Nāmā*, Beveridge, III, p. 46; Text III, p. 32.

14 *Tūzūk*, I, Beveridge, p. 104; Text I, p. 51 (Elliot and Dowson, VI, pp. 314-5).

15 *Akbar Nāmā*, Beveridge, II, p. 221; Text, II, p. 143.

16 Jaipur Akhbārāt; 24th year (Elliot and Dowson, VI, pp. 288-9).

17 Fryer, I, p. 243.

means 'censuring'. Offences not covered by *hadd* came under this category. If the offence was repeated the punishment was increased. The punishment was intended to reform the culprit. *Tazir* came into the Muslim law at a comparatively late stage. Since its main object was reformation of the criminal, the quantum of punishment varied with social status.¹⁸ The judge, too, had greater discretion. Personal confession by the offender or evidence by two witnesses were enough to hold the person guilty.¹⁹ *Qisas* means 'retaliation'. This again is a novel concept of law in which the next of kin could of themselves kill the murderer.²⁰ But the killing had to be done under the supervision of a judge. This was a kind of authorised revenge, recalling Bacon's famous observation 'Revenge is a kind of wild justice'.²¹ Where the victim had been gravely injured but was not dead, retaliation meant a hand for a hand and a foot for a foot. If the murderer escaped the death punishment at the hands of his avengers he had nevertheless to pay compensation or blood money.²² *Tashhir* was an ancient form of punishment, and finds mention in the Institutes of Manu. It was adopted by Muslim rulers. The idea was to humiliate the offender. The method of punishment was usually to parade the guilty person on an ass through the streets, often after shaving his head and beard and blackening his face. Women were often punished in this way. Sometimes the offender was made to sit facing the animal's tail. Officers who failed in their duty, witnesses who gave false evidence, or royal princes who rebelled, were punished in this way. Jahāngir, for example, punished his rebellious son Khusrav and his two associates by having them sewn in skins of an ox and an ass with the horns obtruding. They were made to sit on asses with their faces turned towards the tail and taken through the streets of Lahore.²³

18 *Dictionary of Islām*, p. 632.

19 *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, IV, p. 710.

20 In case there was more than one person aggrieved all of them had to agree to kill the murderer.

21 Francis Bacon, *Essays*, On Revenge.

22 *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, II, p. 1041.

23 *Tūzūk*, vol. I, pp. 84-5.

Offences against the state, like misappropriation, default in payment of revenue, rebellion and so forth, got severe punishment, the mode of which varied according to the emperor's desire. The offender was trampled to death by elephants, bitten by poisonous snakes, buried alive or tortured in many ways.

Judicial Organisation

The Royal Court— The Mughal judicial system was modelled after the Caliphate of Baghdad and of Egypt. The emperor was the head of the judicial organisation and the fountainhead of justice. All Mughal emperors held court regularly, and even when they were on tour out of the capital. When he was on his Bengal expedition, Akbar held his court in the boat. Bābur and Humāyūn sat once a week for deciding cases. The practice was continued by Bābur's successors, and some of the like Humāyān Akbar and Jahāngīr introduced novelties. Humāyūn placed a 'drum of justice' near the audience hall.²⁴ Akbar began the practice of administering justice personally in open court every morning at the *jharokha darshan* (public audience) where he sat for two hours. Jahāngīr installed a chain of justice for instant redress. Apart from the week day particularly earmarked for judicial work, the Mughal emperors held court for a few hours daily for receiving complaints and deciding ordinary matters meriting their attention. Both civil and criminal matters came up before the emperor. It could be an appeal or something coming up for the first time. Local inquiries were also ordered by the emperor and the report would be put up before him to assist decision. Cases involving capital punishment were decided by the king himself. If the governors or any other authority decided them the final order imposing death penalty had to be confirmed by the king. No one was to be executed

24 Complainants would strike the drum so as to make their complaint reach the emperor. If a complainant gave the drum one stroke it meant a petty dispute. Two strokes meant a complaint about non-payment of wages or salary. Three strokes indicated a property dispute. Four meant murder or bloodshed.

unless such an order was passed by the emperor for the third time.

The hearing of cases by courts was much simpler than now inasmuch as there were no lawyers and no definite prescribed procedure. Emperors called the chief *qazī*, *muftīs* and other important law dignitaries to assist them in the law points involved. The *kotwāl* would also be present. Evidence was generally oral. Testimony of close relations or that of a master in favour of a slave was not accepted. Then, as now, hired witnesses were common. Manucci remarks that despite 'Aurangzīb's exertions to be justice-loving, his kingdom is overrun with men whose only profession is to act as false witnesses or to forge signatures.'²⁵ Tavernier says that witnesses could always be had 'in great numbers, at a cheap rate, and never punished'.²⁶ Akbar was particularly observant about the demeanour of witnesses. Abu'l-Fazl writes 'He (Akbar) opens the gates of justice and holds an open court. In the investigation into the cases of the oppressed, he places no reliance on testimony or on oaths, which are the resources of the crafty, but draws his conclusions from the contradictions in the narratives, the physiognomy, and sublime researches and noble conjectures. Truth takes her place in this centre. In this work he spends not less than *one and a half pahars* (i.e. four and a half hours).'

The aim of the Mughal judicial system was mainly to settle individual complaints and disputes. If justice was quick as foreign travellers observed, it was also capricious. One man might be pardoned for a crime for which another was executed. It was a common practice for *qazīs*, who were the kingpin of the Mughal administration of justice, to accept gifts.²⁷ They also had ample opportunity to amass wealth and they made full use of it.²⁸ They were unscrupulous, and their decisions were chiefly directed by their greed.²⁹ Most of them were corrupt and ignorant.³⁰ Aurangzīb's chief *qazī*, 'Abdul Wahab

25 Manucci, III, 262.

26. Tavernier, I, 269.

27 *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, II, 606; *Dictionary of Islām*, p. 255.

28 *Islāmic Society in the West*, vol. I, part II, p. 126.

29 Hurgronje, *Mohammadanism*, p. 111.

30 *Islāmic Society and the West*, vol. I, part II. p. 126.

Borah was notorious for corruption and made a fortune of more than thirty-three *lakhs* of rupees. Muhammad Rashid *qazī* of Burhanpur was dismissed and arrested for corruption. Nor could justice possibly be cheap. Apart from the bribes and gifts which went to the officers, litigants had to knock at many doors before they could finally have the king's audience. It was improbable that the Muslim emperor's, despite all their good intentions, found enough time to dispose of all the cases which came up to them. With all their theatrical devices to bring themselves close to the people, they remained far as ever. Few must have dared to strike Humāyūn's 'drum of justice'. Jahāngīr's chain would have rusted if it were not of gold. The grandeur and solemnity of the court was enough to awe the ordinary person. He had to be careful of what he said and how he said it. Even the great Shivājī was cast into prison merely for protesting too vehemently against the undignified treatment he got in Aurangzīb's court. The accessibility of the royal courts of Muslim emperors was a myth. Long journeys in the Middle Ages, too, were fraught with dangers and difficulties. Many people would hesitate to undertake them. Roads were unsafe, distance long and travel slow and torturous. Besides provincial and local authorities did not quite appreciate people carrying matters up to the king.

The chief qāzī—The chief *qāzī* was the head of the judicial organisation, and next to the emperor in dispensing justice. He was also head of the ecclesiastical and charity departments. In this capacity he was known as the chief *sadr*. He held office at the king's pleasure, but so long as he did his work honestly and conscientiously he was not interfered with. He was well learned in Islāmic theology, and was assisted by a *muftī* who placed rulings of the Islāmic law before him, by which he was invariably guided. Primarily an appellate court, the chief *qazī* also decided cases of the first instance. The chief *qazī* had jurisdiction over the empire. There were *qāzīs* too in each *parganā* and in each town. One was attached to the army (known as *qazī-i-askar*) though he did not have exclusive jurisdiction, for anyone in the army could file a complaint in the court of a city *qāzī*. Moreover if one of the parties was a civilian, his jurisdiction was barred.

The *qāzī* tried religious cases and those relating to the Muslim personal law. He also visited jails, looked after the conditions of the prisoners and discharged those who were qualified to be freed. Suitable candidates for appointment as subordinate *qāzīs* were recommended by him. He held his court in a mosque or in his house, though in Akbar's time state buildings were provided.

Secular Courts—The *qāzī* tried mainly cases of a religious nature and those involving the personal law of Muslims. Others offences including criminal and political ones were tried by the common law courts. These were the governors and *dīwāns* of the provinces, the *faujdārs* in districts, the *amils* (collectors) and *shīqdars* of *parganās* and the *kōtwāls* of the towns. They administered justice on the basis of common or customary law and equity. The governor also set apart a day for court work. He was assisted by the provincial *qazī* and *muftī*. He cross-examined witnesses in order to find out the truth, and also studied their behaviour to assess the veracity of their statements. He was to try and reform criminals familing which he would punish by reprimands, threats and imprisonment. In serious cases mutilations could be resorted to. In the beginning governors could impose capital punishment, but Akbar took these powers away. The *faujdars* maintained law and order in the districts. He guarded the roads against robbers. Whenever a robbery took place in his district he had to trace out the robbers, find out the lost goods or compensate the sufferer.³¹ The guilty persons were sent to the governor for punishment.³² The *kōtwāl* was chief of the city police, and had many duties to perform.³³ He was required to attend the court of justice held by the emperor. He had to carry out investigation and decide if the person caught for a crime ought to be taken to court by the complainant. His duties in this respect were almost similar to the prosecuting agency of the police, except that instead of charging the alleged criminal himself, the *kōtwāl* left it to the aggrieved party. In Aurangzib's time there were *thānedārs* in

31 Thavenot, III, p. 35.

32 *Mīrāt-i-Ahmadi*, I, p. 282.

33 These have been given in the chapter on Administration.

the *parganās* who were known as *tahawar sha 'ār* or '*tahawar dastgāh*. The *gumāshta*, *chaudhari*, *qānūngo*, news-writer and biographer attended their courts.

Panchāyats—Rural areas, which contained the bulk of the people, had their own courts. There was a *panchayat* in each village which decided civil and criminal cases. This was an elected body. Prominent and worthy people of the village were generally its members. Decisions were unanimous, and minor punishments like fines, reprimand, public degradation and turning out from the caste or community were given to guilty persons. Apart from its judicial functions, the village *panchāyat* was able to appeal to the people's conscience by exposing guilt, crime and evil. It had a great deal of reformatory power. Many matters were solved locally by it and much crime prevented. Being local, residents, the *panches* knew more about local customs and traditions than outside agencies. Very little of what happened in the village could escape their knowledge. So they could arrive at the truth sooner and more reliably than other courts who had to depend on the testimony of witnesses, quite a number of whom were not exactly reliable.

Like all other institutions, Mughal justice too varied with the viewpoint of the emperors. Akbar maintained a high standard. He instructed his judges to find out the facts of the cases by all the means at their disposal. The *Āin* says 'The judges should not be satisfied with witnesses and oaths, but pursue them by manifold enquiries, by the study of physiognomy and the exercise of foresight, nor, laying the burden of it on others, live absolved from solicitude.'³⁴ The *qāzīs* were instructed to make a thorough investigation and understand the circumstances of each case. They were asked to properly assess the evidence given by the witnesses. The judges were required to go into the merits of each case 'reinvestigate and inquire into it anew, and with discrimination and singleness of view, and search it to its core'.³⁵ 'If I were guilty of an unjust act' Akbar says, 'I would rise in judgement against myself. What shall I say then of my

34 *Āin-i-Akbarī*, vol. 2, p. 38-9.

35 *Āin-i-Akbarī*, vol. II, pp. 38-9.

sons, my kindred and others?"³⁶ Foreign visitors praised Akbar's justice in high terms. Father Monserrate writes 'The king has the most precise regard for right and justice in the affairs of government. By nature, moreover, he is kind and benevolent and is seriously anxious that guilt should be punished without malice indeed, but at the same time without undue leniency. Hence in case in which he himself acts as judge, the guilty are, by his own direction, not punished until he has given orders for the third time that this shall be done'.³⁷ The emperor wanted his judges to follow the spirit of the law rather than be rigid about it. He asked them to give more importance to reforming the criminal than to punishing him. Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān followed the same tradition. Aurangzīb, however, introduced racial discrimination in justice, as in all things. In his reign the evidence of Hindus ceased to be admissible in certain cases.

If one goes by intentions, the Mughal system of justice was admirable. Most of the emperors were keen to redress wrong and give the people confidence that they would get a hearing. How much could be accomplished is a different matter. Access to the royal presence was in theory easy, but in practice difficult. In its implementation justice could not keep pace with the intentions. Governors *faujdārs*, customs and revenue officers oppressed the people. There was a lot of misuse of authority by public servants. Due to long distances and poor communication central authority was weak, particularly in the far-flung provinces. Bribery in various forms was quite common. It was customary for high officials to receive presents during their visits.

There was no clear cut division between the functions of courts. The appellate courts were also courts entertaining complaints directly. Three separate judicial agencies worked at the same time independent of one another. A litigant could approach any court directly; that of the *parganā qāzī*, or provincial *qāzī* or of the chief *qāzī*. If he so wished he could ignore all of these and approach the emperor. Powers of courts

36 *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 434.

37 *Commentaries*, p. 209; *Mīrat*, vol. I, pp. 164-6.

were not defined. There was no division between civil, penal and personal law. Bernier notes that Indian judges did not have enough powers to redress the oppressed subjects.³⁸

It is difficult to pass judgement on the Mughal administrative system because of its fastly changing character from one ruler to another. Views, even of contemporaries, appear to be vastly diverse. For example Luke Scrafton resident for the English East India Company in 1658 says 'up to the invasion of Nādir Shāh in 1739 there was scarce a better administered government in the world. The manufactures, commerce, and agriculture flourished exceedingly; and none felt the hand of the oppression but those who were dangerous by their wealth or power'.³⁹ On the other hand describing the condition existing in 1615, after Bahādur Shāh's death, the chronicler says 'The streets were so crowded that it was difficult to pass along them, and houses could not be found to accommodate the people. Several persons were to be seen seeking refuge in one little shop. Friends and relations were unable to answer the calls made upon them. Great disturbances arose in the armies of the Princes, and none of the great men had any hope of saving their lives. The soldiers loudly demanded their pay and allowances, and joining the unceremonious servants, they made use of foul and abusive language, and laid their hands on everything they found. Fathers could do nothing to help their sons, nor sons for their fathers. Every man had enough to do in taking care of himself, and the scene was like the day of judgement'.⁴⁰ Describing the condition of the government on the eve of Nādir Shāh's invasion Ghulām Husain Khān says, 'The government was rotten, the emperor was powerless'.⁴¹ One thing can be said with certainty. The Mughal administration had reached the highest point of its glory with Akbar. Thereafter it declined slowly till.

38 Bernier, II, p. 253.

39 Luke Scrafton, *Reflections on the Government of Indostan*, London, 1770.

40 Muhammad Hādī Kāmwar Khan, *Tazkira-i-Chaghhatāi*.

41 *Siyaru-I Muta-akhkhirīn*.

Aurangzīb, and swiftly thereafter. As for the system of justice it was a stagnant one. It mainly reflected the changes of juristic thought in Arabia and Egypt. It did not grow and change to fit in with local requirements. Malleon says 'The lines upon which justice was administered by the officers of Akbar were the same as those introduced by his Afghān predecessors'.

Economic Conditions

1000 to 1300

Cities and Villages

While villages remained the main centres of Indian economy in the period between the downfall of the Hindu empire and the beginning of Turkish rule, cities were fast springing up. The peasants were masters of their land. They paid the state revenue which was perhaps one-sixth of the income, though higher in emergencies. In north India payment was usually made in money. In the south, however, the revenue was paid partly in cash and partly in kind i.e. a portion of the produce. In most regions the peasant had to sell off some of his produce in order to pay his share of revenue. As all of them were forced to sell their crops at the same time, there was a glut in the market resulting in their getting a rather low price. Royal grants and assignments of land for various purposes were also made but these meant only transfer of the king's dues and rights in favour of the donees. In the south we find frequent gifts and sales of land being made by village communities. Pious donors who gave charities appointed them as trustees.

A number of cities, marts and seaports were becoming prominent because of the growing trade in various articles like musk, saffron, cotton, garments, tiger-skins, lead, tin and so forth. An

inscription of 1204 relating to the city of Belgaum (in Dhārwar district) mentions a pious endowment by 'an assembly of itinerant traders and all the traders of Lāṭa (Gujarāt) and the Malayalam country and all the other traders of the locality headed by the gold-workers and others and the oil-merchants'.¹ Customs duties were levied on certain commodities at ports like rose-water, copper, zinc, lead, silk-thread, corals, perfumes, pepper and areca-nuts. The inhabitants of the city regulated its economic life. An inscription of the time of Kulottuṅga III mentions that a certain *naḍu* and *nagara* assembled together in a temple and made an agreement for converting a village granted by them into a mercantile town.

Agriculture and Industry

Agriculture, which was the main stay of the people, received great importance. Many kinds of food-grains and vegetables were grown. Eight varieties of rice and seven different kinds of beans were known.² The rice of Magadha and of the Kāliṅga country was famous and served to royalty.³ The fruits and grapes of Kāshmir were considered delicious.⁴ Date trees and those of coconut were abundant in Sandān and Saymūr (south Canara) Ginger and cinnamon in Madura and the Pāṇḍya kingdom.⁵ Bengal produced spikenard and other spices, ginger, sugar and other articles. Cardamom grew on the hill-slopes at Fandarīna in such great quantity that it formed an item of export.⁶ Malabar was particularly rich in pepper,⁷ though it was also grown in Sandān and other places. Indigo was produced in great quantities in Gujārat, Quilon and Tāna.⁸ Kūlam was known for its teak wood.⁹ Other products were, sandalwood,

1 Epigraphia Indica, XIII, 18f.

2 *Mānasollāsa*, III, 1346-48, 1358.

3 *Ibid.*, III, 1347.

4 *Rājatarāṅginī of Kalhaṇa*, I, 42.

5 Marco Polo, *Travels*, II, 389.

6 Idrīsī, *Nainar*, Ch 1.

7 Marco Polo, *Travels*, II, 39.

8 Marco Polo, II, 393.

9 Yāgūt and Qazwīnī, *Nainar*, Ch. IV.

yellow sandal and saffron. The Gulf of Cambay (in Kūlī) yielded a number of varieties of bamboo at Sandān, Tānā, Saymūr and Quilon.

Silk, wool and fly-whisks made from the tail of the Himālayan *Chamara-deer*, were products of the hill country. Elephant's tusks or ivory were obtained in the Chola kingdom. The leather industry was greatly developed. Marco Polo tells us that Tāna had a great export of leather of many kinds. Cambay dealt in hides. Lovely mats were made in Gujarāt 'in red and blue leather, exquisitely inlaid with figures of birds and beasts and skilfully embroidered with gold and silver wire'. Cushions embroidered in gold were also made here. These articles were in great demand in foreign countries. Another thriving industry was that of pearls. Pearls were found particularly on the Malabar sea-coast and in the gulf between India and Ceylon. The pearl fishers, who engaged expert divers for pearls, had to pay a royalty of ten per cent of their finds to the king.

The textile industry was another source of profit and employment. The Mānasollāsa gives a long list of fabrics used by the kings of these times, produced in the Chola country, Anilāvāda, Mūlasthāna (Multān), Kaliṅga and Vaṅga. Mālwa was famous for cotton cloth which was sent abroad. Gujarāt produced chintzes of many colours. Fine buckram was made in Malabar. The Chola country was famed for 'Cotton stuffs with coloured silk threads'. The arts of washing and dyeing were practised in Ma'bar. Cloth manufactured in the Telugu country was superb. Marco Polo says that the most delicate and costly buckrams were produced here, which looked like tissues of spiders' web and were fit for any king or queen in the world.¹⁰

Stone-cutting and stone-polishing are Indian industries which date back to ancient times. Beautiful stone images and stone-terraces around sacred tanks which won the admiration of Al-Birūni, were the handiworks of this age. The art of metal working is manifest in the skill of the ironsmiths of the period. The iron beams of unwrought iron in the temples of Bhuvaneshvara, Purī and Konārak and the famous iron-pillar at Dhār, now broken into three pieces, are also proof of this.

10 Marco Polo, *Travels*, II, 361.

Another craft in which the Indians of this period excelled was gold and silver work and the making of jewellery of distinction. The *Mānasollāsa* mentions the golden lion-throne and the king's bedsteads inlaid with gold. Temples were decorated with gold. Ornaments of gold and silver were presented to the deities, and their images were beautifully modelled out of these precious metals. The jewellers worked with excellence. Various precious stones and jewels are mentioned, like crystal, sun-stone, moon-stone, emerald, ruby, coral, diamond, sapphire, lapis lazuli and pearls. Large sized diamonds were found in the kingdom of Mutfli (warangal).

Foreign Trade and Trade Routes

The main overland routes were those connecting India with (i) Western Asia and (ii) Central Asia and China. With the advent of Islām these routes passed into the control of Muslim rulers.

The important trade centres were as follows:

1. Ma'bar—This was a kind of clearing house for the goods of the east and the west. Goods from China and Sindh came here as well as shipments from Irāq, Khurāsān, Rum, Europe and the Persian Gulf. Wassaf calls Ma'bar the 'key of Hind.'
2. Cail (Kayal on the Tāmraparnī river)—Marco Polo describes it as a great and noble city visited by ships from the Persian Gulf and the Arabian coast with goods laden for sale.¹¹
3. Fandarīna is mentioned by Idrīsī as a port of call for ships from India to Sind.
4. Quilon was, according to Chou K'ufeī, a port of transshipment of traders from the small boats of the Arabian sea to the bigger one of the seas of China. Chau Ju-Kua says that Quilon was a port of call for ships coming San-fo-ts'i. According to Abu Dulaf it was a port for embarkation for 'Umān (in Arabia). Merchants from

11 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its own Historians*, Trübner, II, 370.

- south China Arabia and the Levant came to Quilon with their ships and merchadise and profited greatly by the import and export trade.
5. Another port was Eli which, despite the fact that it had no proper harbours, was visited by ships from South China and other countries in summer.
 6. Barūsh (Broach, on the Gujarāt coast) was visited by vessels coming from China and Sind.
 7. Cambay was another port mentioned by Marco Polo. A number of merchant ships called there. Other ports of lesser importance are also mentioned.¹²

Indian ships also went out to foreign ports for trade and commerce. Benjamin of Tudela, a Spanish Jew who travelled in 1159, tells us that Indian merchants took their goods to the island of Kish in the Persian Gulf which was one the great international trade centres of those times. At the close of the thirteenth century Marco Polo mentions that Indian ships touched Hormos (Hormuz) in the Persian Gulf for trade with west Asia. Another city in the Persian Gulf was Calatu to which Indian traders went. Marco Polo also speaks of trade with the islands of Madagascar and Zanzibar and with medieval China. Indian ships laden with spices and other costly goods frequented the Chinese port of Zayton or Chinchew-in Fu-Kien.

Imports and Exports

Among the articles exported by India there were spices which were carried to the island of Kish in the Persian Gulf, precious stones, pearls clothes of silk and gold, elephant's tusks and so forth. Gujarāt produced indigo, myrobolans and coloured cotton stuffs in abundance, and these were exported to Arabia and other lands.

A large number of articles were imported. Incense (called *turushka*) was particularly noticed by Marco Polo. Cloves, spikenard and other spices were brought to Malabar by ships

12 Bullīn, Subara, Tāna, Jurbatan, Sandān and Sindābūr.

from the east.¹³ Gold, silver and copper came from Java and Combay and gold particularly from Sumatra. Silks and cloths of gold came from the east. Fine fabrics of great China (*Mahāchīnabhava*) are mentioned in the *Mānasollāsa*. These were used for the king's wardrobe. Other fine stuffs were imported from Ceylon. A great deal of money was spent on thorough breds imported from Arab and Persia. Indians were completely ignorant about the proper training of horses. They fed their horses with boiled rice and boiled meat and various other cooked food, all harmful to them. They had no farriers, and foreign merchants prevented any farrier from coming to India, lest their trade be hampered. No horses were bred. All these factors necessitated the import of foreign steeds at fabulous prices. Each horse cost as much as 220 *dīnāras* of 'red gold.'¹⁴

Commercial Guilds and Corporations

The prominence achieved by merchants' guilds in Hindu India was maintained in the period under review. These guilds of merchants as well as craftsmen made their own rules for exerting their authority and for controlling the markets. In order to meet emergencies like drought, floods, activities of thieves and robbers and so forth the guilds devised schemes and compacts which bound even the kings. They established monopolies for specific sections if it was necessary for the protection of trade. The guilds acted through executive committees of two, three or five 'overseers of public business,' called *kāryachintakas*. They had their codes of conduct, and punished those of their members who transgressed against their regulations, with fines and expulsion from the assembly. If the guilds failed to set the offending member right, the king could also punish him by confiscating his property and banishing him from the kingdom.

A number of guilds flourished. There was one comprising of horse dealers. A prominent trade corporation of the name of *Nānādesha-Tishaiyāyirattu Aīññūrruvar* mentioned in an

13 R.H. Major, *India in the Fifteenth Century*, II, 390.

14 Estimated by Yule at 550 'western *dīnārs*'.

inscription of 1050 of Mysore¹⁵ traded in elephants and horses, gems and pearls, perfumes spices and drugs. Members of the corporation visited many lands. They were served by swordsmen and foot-soldiers. A thirteenth century inscription tells us that a native of Cranganore made a donation in favour of a temple of Vishṇu founded in his city. The guilds also acquired for themselves important charters.

Apart from these there were partnerships of capitalists and labourers mainly for purposes of agriculture, trade, crafts, sacrifices, singing and the commission of theft in enemy countries. The partners worked on a sharing of profit and loss basis. If a partner acted unauthorisedly and thereby caused loss to the partnership, he had to make good whatever loss was caused through his negligence. If he prevented loss through his own exertion as in the case of fire, flood and so forth, he would get a tenth of the property thus saved as his share. Relations between labour and employer were properly regulated in regard to compensation, liability and so forth, laid down in the *smṛiti-chandrikā* and other books of those times.

Economic Condition of the People

From the accounts of these times it is apparent that a high level of economic prosperity prevailed. Its fabulous wealth can be gauged by the accounts of loot and plunder of the early Muslim invaders like Mahmūd of Ghaznī. Both contemporary Muslim chroniclers and foreign visitors bear testimony to this. Marco Polo describes the land of Ma 'bar as 'the best of all the Indies and the finest and noblest province of the world.' The temples glittered with gold and precious stones. When intent on plunder, Mahmūd entered the holy city of Mathurā he was amazed to see the grandeur of the main temple there, which he estimated could not be costing less than 100,000,000 red *dīnārs*, and which even the most skilful of masons must have taken two hundred years to build. In front of the chamber containing the idol in the Somanātha temple he found a bell to which a gold chain weighing two hundred *mans* in weight was attached.

15 *Epigraphia Carnatica*, VII, Sk, 118.

IN THE SULTANATE

Cities and Villages

The village remained, as before, a self sufficient unit and the backbone of Indian economy. The local administrative institutions prevailed, but the dominance of feudal rule was affecting the villages too. Cities became grander. With their dread of village life, Muslim nobles patronised them more. Ibn Batūtah has high praise for Quilon and Calicut in Malabar. The Portuguese chronicler, Barbosa, says that early in the sixteenth century the rich sea-ports of Gujarāt, the Deccan, Malabar and Bengal handled an extensive trade in many kinds of merchandise. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Vijayanagara's skilled craftsmen and dealers in jewels and precious gems impressed foreign visitors. Domingo Paes says that its streets and markets were full of countless pack-oxen, making it difficult for men to move about. Temples played a prominent part in public economy. They employed a large number of labourers and advanced loans to needy persons on the security of their land.

Agriculture and Cattle Rearing

Farmers were industrious and produced two crops a year. In the autumn there were millet, peas and beans. Wheat, barley, chick peas and lentils were grown in spring. Sesame and Sugar-cane were cultivated with autumn crops. Rice was sown thrice a year. Ibn Batūtah noticed that along the Malabar coast not a span of land was left uncultivated. Every house had a garden. Barbosa adds that there were coconut trees on the sea-beach. He was also impressed with the extensive cultivation of rice, peas, beans and other pulses as well as the breeding of domestic animals on a large scale. Speaking of the capital of Bengal (Gauḍa) with its sea-port at Sātgaon, Barbosa says 'There are many cotton fields, sugar-cane, and ginger pepper plantations, as well as gardens of orange, lemon and other fruit trees, the good white sugar produced from sugar-cane finding a rich market in other lands. There was likewise an abundance of horses, sheep,

and domestic fowl.¹⁶ Abd-ur-Razzāq found well laid gardens in Vijayanagara. The fields, he says got water from the lakes. In Orissa there were excellent gardens and fruit trees in the houses of the city dwellers. 'Cattle and sheep were so cheap that they found no buyers, and horses were sold at the low price of ten *jitals* (copper coins) each.' Ma Huan, a Chinese traveller who visited Bengal in the middle of the fifteenth century, found rice grown twice a year, two kinds of millets, sesamum and beans, ginger, mustard, onions and garlic, cucumber, egg-plants and sugar-cane. Other products mentioned by him are coconut and betelnut, banana, jack-fruit and pomegranate.

Many varieties of fruit trees were cultivated. Mango, which was India's speciality could not go unnoticed by foreigners. Fei Hsin, the Chinese writer mentions it. Jack-fruits, black-berries, bananas, Oranges and pomegranates were others. Fruits apparently were a favourite, for travellers from abroad are agreed that fruit bearing trees were planted in the compounds of most city dwellers. There were extensive groves and orchards.

Another Indian product was spices which were in great demand in foreign countries. Malabar in the south was noted particularly for these. Abu-'l-Feda and Ibn Batūtah describe it as 'the pepper country.' Odoric and John de Marignolli say it was the only country in the world for the growth and supply of pepper. Malabar's ginger was the best in the world.

Vegetables were grown in abundance all over. Ma Huan noticed a number of them being cultivated in Bengal. Another product was betel leaves which were widely consumed in India. Barbosa refers to many villages with many fair gardens for the cultivation of betel leaves in the Deccan. They were also grown at Dhār (Mālwa), Betel-nuts and areca-nuts were so plentiful that they were exported to China where they were in great demand.

Textiles and Other Industries

Gujarāt, Bengal and the Deccan were the principal areas in

16 *Rehla of Ibn Batūtah* (Trans. M. Husain), 16-19.

which the Indian textile industry of the Sultānate period flourished. Foreign travellers were greatly impressed by the excellent quality and the gorgeous variety of Indian cloth, Gujarāt was particularly renowned for it. Barbosa says that many skilled craftsmen lived in Cambay. They produced fine and coarse cotton fabrics, printed cotton cloth, silks, velvets and satins. Much of this material found an export market in West Europe, South Africa, and Indonesia. Beautiful carpets and attractive quilts were also made in Cambay. The sea-port of Patenexy (perhaps Veraval-Somanāth) produced a lot of richly embroidered silk and cotton cloth of many hues and textures.

Bengal excelled in finer textiles. When Ibn Batūtah visited India in 1346, pieces of cotton cloth were being sold locally at the cheap price of thirty cubits for two silver coins (*dīnars*). Ma Huan, the Chinese writer mentions six varieties of cotton cloth and many kinds of silk brocaded handkerchiefs and caps woven with gold. Wang Ta-Yuan and Fei Hsin, two Chinese writers, as well as Barbosa, also mention many kinds of textiles like the *bettela* (a kind of organdi), chintz, *shana-baf* (a fine cotton variety) cotton velvets, cloth for making turbans and so forth. Barbosa says that the cloths of Bengal were of 'superior quality, and found a good market in Malacca and Ormuz.

In the south the town of Shaliyat in Malabar was famous for its cotton fabrics. An expensive kind of cotton cloth was manufactured in Kanpai (Coimbatore). Costly silks with coloured stripes, each piece priced at about a hundred gold coins were also produced here. Flowered chintz and dyed cotton cloths are mentioned by Chinese writers. Barbosa says that very fine cotton silk and gold interlaced cloth was made in the Maldive Islands. Finely wrought and beautiful handkerchiefs were made here too. These were worn by the inhabitants around their caps. Pulicat produced an excellent variety of printed cotton which was in great demand in Burma, Malacca and Sumatra.

Jewellery, both of gold silver, and artificial jewellery was plentiful. Ivory work and work in precious stones was carried on in a number of places. Gold and silver articles, pearls, precious stones and jewellery were displayed in Mughal courts and camps. Gold was used to bribe greedy officers to obtain the keys of forts when valour failed. It was paid as ransom

money to conquerors and secured peace from marauders. Tons of it was looted and plundered by the gold-thirsty Muslim chiefs and rulers. There were excellent goldsmiths in Cambay. A great deal of work was done there in coral, carnelian and other stones. Imitation gems and pearls made there were so good that they looked like real. Cambay was famous for ivory work also. Bracelets and sword-hilts were inlaid with ivory. It was also used in chess-pieces, bedsteads and beads. Precious stones were cut into various shapes and used for making knobs of dagger-hilts. The Maldive islands produced fine tortoise-shell. Gems like diamonds Sapphires and rubies which were obtained principally from the Deccan, Ceylon and Pegu, were cut and polished at Pulicat Calicut and Vijayanagara. Pearls were got off Kayal (in the delta of the Tāmraparṇī river) and on the northern coast of Ceylon.

There were a number of industries connected with metal work. Swords, guns and household articles like knives, trays and basins were made. A great deal of sugar was produced in Bengal, some of it being also exported.

Industries were generally privately owned. There were large government factories also (*kārkhānas*) which supplied the state requirements. Thousands of weavers were employed for these state factories both in the centre and in the regions for making silks and other textiles.

Trade—Inland, Coastal and Overseas

(1) *Inland Trade*—Ibn Batutāh says that Delhi was the largest market in the world. Rice from Sarsuti, sugar from Kanauj, wheat from Marh and betel-leaf from Dhār, came there for being sold. Hindu merchants of Daulatābād traded in pearls and accumulated a lot of wealth. The sea-port of Cambay was a market for carnelian beads. These were taken there from Limodara (in Gujarāt) for export to Europe and east Africa. Dabhol, the Deccan port, was another important trading point. Imports of copper passed through it, and cloth, wheat, millets and pulses were sent out. Products of Malacca and China went to the sea-port of Rander in Gujarāt where many enterprising Muslim merchants did a brisk trade in products of Malacca and

China. Goa was the centre of the trade in horses which were bought for a high price by merchants from Vijayanagara and the Deccan. The prosperous Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagara obtained many articles from various parts of India, as Barbosa tells us. Pearls were got from ormuz and Kayal, diamonds from the Deccan, precious stones from Pegu and Ceylon, brocades from China and Alexandria, pepper from Malabar, coloured cloths, corals, metals, quicksilver, vermilion, saffron, rose-water, opium, sandal-wood, aloes-wood, camphor, and musk from other places. Merchants of Vijayanagara went to Pulicat to buy Burmese rubies and musk. The excellent roads existing in these times, as for example the one from Delhi to Daulatābād, were a great help in inland trade. But the roads were infested with robbers and brigands, and travel was by no means safe. That took away much of their utility.

(2) *Coastal Trade*—The narratives of Ibn Batūtah and Barbosa mention a number of sea-ports which were prominent trade centres. On the western coast there were Diu in Gujarāt, Goa in the Deccan, and Calicut, Cochin and Quilon in Malabar. The merchants of Malabar and Gujarāt mostly handled this trade. Imports were cocoanuts, cardamoms and other spices, emery, wax, palm-sugar, sandal-wood, brazil-wood, silks and other articles. Exports consisted of mainly cotton and other cloth, foodgrains, horses and carnelians. In the region of Tulu, the port of Bhatkal was frequented by merchants from Malabar, who imported cocoanuts, spices, palm-sugar and palm-wine, and exported rice cotton and sugar.

There was a brisk trade in Ceylon. This was controlled largely by Indians Colombo, the capital, was the meeting place of merchants from Coromandel, Malabar, Vijayanagara, Gujarat and the Deccan. Superfine Cambay cloth, saffron, coral, quicksilver cinnabar, gold and silver were imported by them. Trade was very profitable here Hindu and Muslim merchants of Malabar were engaged in the trade of the Vijayanagara empire and that of the Coromandel coast. The imports were areca-nuts, cocoanuts, pepper and palm-sugar. There were a large number of articles exported like rice and cloth, and sometimes even children sold into slavery by parents in times of famine and scarcity.

Pulicat, as has been said above, was a great market for musk

and Burmese rubies. A large number of Muslim ships visited this port. The renowned muslims of Bengal and cane-sugar of good variety was exported by these Muslim merchants to Malabar, Cambay and other places, where a good price could be obtained for them.

(3) *Overseas Trade*—There were two overseas trade routes opening out to the Mediterranean, one *via* the Persian Gulf and the other through the Red Sea and Egypt. On the former route Ormuz was a prominent trade centre, while on the Red Sea route Aden and Jiddah controlled the sea traffic. Indian ports which handled the trade were Malabar, Mangalore, Ely, Calicut, Quilon, Diu, Chaul, Dabhol, Goa, Bhatkal and Calicut.

Trade was with China, Europe, east Africa, south-east and east Asia. The foreign and semi-foreign Muslims, Arabs and Persians monopolised the greater part of the trade. Among the articles imported from India into Ormuz were pepper, cloves, ginger and cardamoms, sandal-wood and brazil-wood, saffron, indigo, wax, iron, sugar, rice, coconuts, precious stones, benzoin, porcelain, cloths from Cambay, Chaul and Dabhol, as well as Bengal muslims. The goods carried to India were Arabian horses, dates, rasins, salt, sulphur and coarse seed-pearls. The trade traffic which went between Aden and the Indian ports was also considerable. Cotton cloth in great quantity, drugs, gems, seed-pearls and carnelians were imported into India by this route, while exports covered opium, black madder, copper, quicksilver, vermilion, rose-water, gold, woollens, coloured velvets, and cloths of mixed silk and cotton. Other substances imported into India through the overseas routes were : coral, lead, silver, alum, saffron, superior opium, rice, coloured velvets and camlets and woollens. A large number of good horses also found their way into India where they had a good market. Besides the aforesaid exports from India abroad, there were: rice, pepper, ginger, cinnamon, cardamoms, myrobalans, tamarinds, precious stones, musk, ambergris, rhubarb, aloes-wood and porcelains.

Barbosa tells us about India's trade with east Africa. There was a brisk exchange of goods between Cambay and the African ports of Makdashau, Melinde, Mombasa and Kilwa. From

these African cities they were carried to the ports of the Zambesi delta and Sofala for sale to the inhabitants of the Bantu kingdom in the interior. The goods which went out of India were mainly cloth, spices and beads. The cloth of Cambay was particularly prized in Africa and fetched a high price. In return ships from African ports brought into India, gold, ivory and wax.

A large volume of overseas trade appears to have existed between India and south-east Asia. Barbosa mentions that the port of Malacca, which established itself as an independent Muslim state in the fifteenth century, was the premier trade market of those times. It was the international port of south-east Asia. A number of prosperous merchants, Hindus and Muslims lived there. They owned large estates and great ships. Ships laden with merchandise from many lands touched Malacca. They brought pepper, incense, cloth of Cambay, saffron, coral, printed cloths of Bengal, vermilion, quicksilver, opium, rose-water and drugs from India. These products were carried to Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Moluccas, Timor, and Banda, to be exchanged for others. There was gold from Sumatra, cloves from the Moluccas, white sandal-wood from Timor, mace and nutmegs from Banda, camphor from Borneo and aloes-wood from Champa.¹⁷ Another important sea-port was Pegu. Indian goods which were brought there included printed cloths, opium, copper, vermilion, quicksilver, rose-water and drugs. Burma lac, mace, cloves, musk and rubies came from Pegu to India. There were rich merchants in Rander (near-Surāt). Their ships, laden with Indian goods went to Pegu, Martaban, Sumatra and Tenasserim. Merchants from Quilon and Bengala city also sailed to these ports.¹⁸

Hindu traders were generally confined to inland trade, while that with places outside India was with Muslims. The Shiāh merchants of Quilon were particularly well off. In the trade with south-east Asia, however, Hindus were partners with Muslims. Muslim traders living in the Hindu kingdoms of the

17 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960, vol. VI, p. 651.

18 *Ibid.*, quoting Rockhill in *Toung Pao*, XVI, 43ff.

Sultānate prospered because of the favourable conditions in regard to roads and travel. The Hindu rulers of Malabar, for example, provided wooden shacks, and wells for drinking water, at every half mile on roads. Theft was punished with death, so there was complete security. Quilon's Hindu ruler had great regard for Muslim merchants living there. In Calicut the king helped foreign merchants who came there for trade by appointing for each a bodyguard, an accountant and a broker. Barbosa tells us that the Hindu ruler of Kayal had given a Muslim monopoly of the pearl fishing there. In Vijayanagara merchants were free to move about as they pleased without any harassment or enquiry.

Economic Condition of the People

Evidence about the general economic condition of the people is quite meagre. There are accounts of foreign travellers like Athanasius Nikitin, Nicolo Conti, Barbosa Wang Ta-Yuan and Huang Sheng-tseng, apart from that of 'Abd-ur Razzāq the Muslim chronicler. These writers narrate the glory of the cities they visited and the splendour of the courts of kings and Sultāns. But about the common people, their references are rare. Delhi was the largest of all cities in the Islāmic world in the east. General prosperity varied during the Sultānate period, depending on the ruler. 'Alā-ud-dīn, as has been said, raised the revenue demand to one half of the gross produce and imposed a number of taxes so that the people, particularly the Hindus, were reduced to poverty: 'The Hindu chiefs and headmen were so much impoverished that no gold and silver was to be found in the houses of the Hindus; they could not afford to procure horses or weapons; and their wives had to serve for wages in the house of the Muslims'.¹⁹ In the reign of Firūz Tughluq, however, commodities were priced low. 'Afif, the contemporary historian testifies to the cheapness of cloths and other articles. 'The necessities of life 'he says, 'were abundant and grain was cheap'. The period of the Lodīs too was one of general prosperity. In

¹⁹ *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1960, vol. VI, p. 24.

Sikandar's reign trade and agriculture flourished. Grains and other goods were in abundance. Men lived comfortably. Ibrāhīm was keenly interested in agriculture and crops were plentiful. Prices were low and there was general contentment. Timūr's invasion and his indiscriminate loot and plunder caused a set back in Indian economy from which it was slow to recover. But ultimately it did, and when Bābur came to India, he was impressed by the 'masses of gold and silver'.

There is no doubt about the grandeur of the courts of the Sultāns. The royal throne was of pure gold with jewel-studded legs. The parasol over it was also studded with jewels. At the meals which followed the durbārs waiters served food from gold and silver utensils.

Foreign accounts of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries depict the great material prosperity existing in the Sultānate. This was particularly so in Gujarāt. The people of Chāmpāner and Ahmadābād lived in beautiful houses with tiled roofs and huge courtyards containing tanks and wells. Cambay was a big city with imposing houses, wide streets and open places. Wealthy merchants and skilled craftsmen lived there. Muslim merchants of Rander had well furnished houses with grand reception rooms. The *baniyās* of Gujarāt had orchards and tanks in their spacious houses. Their living was of a high standard.

Barbosa describes the Deccan as a very fertile country with large towns and villages. Athanasius Nikitin, the Russian traveller, confirms this when he says that there were villages at every two miles, the land was well laid out and property tilled and the roads safe. But he adds that the country was overstocked and the poverty of the common people was in sharp contrast with the luxury of the nobles who moved about in silver litters with huge retinues. Malabar, in South India, was greatly prosperous because of its flourishing coastal trade.

The prosperity of the kingdom of Vijayanagara has been mentioned by Paes and 'Abd-ur Razzāq. Paes says there were rows of beautiful buildings with artificial tanks and a large population consisting of many merchants. The road connecting the old city to the new one was wide with rows of houses and shops on each side. It was said to be the best provided city.

Nothing ever was in short supply there. Paes notices the cheap prices. Butter, milk, and oil for cooking, were freely available. Birds, game animals, poultry, hares and partridges, doves and pigeons were plentifully got for meat. 'Abd-ur Razzāq says that people considered sweet smelling flowers a necessity. Barbosa also mentions the extraordinary wealth and prosperity of Vijayanagara. The king and nobles lived in palaces. The houses in the city were grand, with open compounds. Jewellery was worn both by women as well as by men.

In eastern India a number of people were engaged in profitable trade. Rice was sold for a price as low as forty-six baskets for just one *cowrie*. Ibn Batūtah found the prices of commodities in Bengal lowest in the world. A citizen there told him that eight small silver coins (*dirhams*) were enough to maintain him, his wife and his servant for the whole year. Nicolo Conti found the banks of the Gaṅga full of charming villages. Fei Hsin, a Chinese traveller, and Barbosa noticed that the men and women wore luxurious dresses and exquisite and costly jewellery. The respectable Muslims of Bengal lived a life of luxury eating well and spending money freely. They wore white cotton smocks with silk scarves, carried daggers ornamented with silver and gold. Needless to say when such was the state of prosperity of the people, the grandeur of kings can be imagined. Huang Sheng-tseng, a Chinese writer of the early sixteenth, gives us a vivid account of the reception accorded to a Chinese embassy by the ruler of Bengal in his capital. Pandua, in the year 1415. The audience hall, he says, had pillars plated with brass figures of flowers and animals. The king sat on a high throne inlaid with precious stones. Afterwards there was a grand banquet at which the members of the mission were presented with gold and silver basins, girdles, flagons, bowls and gowns of white hemp and silk. 'Abdulla mentions an ornamental device in use in the reign of Sikandar Lodī made by a clever craftsman: 'He had made a single writing tablet and a cap out of ivory. Besides he made an earring in the design of a lotus, inside which was set a fly. When the woman put it in her ear, it seemed a bud so long as the head was kept still. As soon as the head was shaken, the bud opened up into a lotus, the fly flew out and hovered in front of

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the eye. When she stopped shaking the head the fly returned to the lotus and became a bud once more'.²⁰ 'Afif says that such was the prosperity of the people that a daughter's dowry was no problem and girls were married at very young age.²¹

The many goods produced required transport for moving by road. They were conveyed in bullock carts, horses, and palanquines. *Ekās* and *tongās* were also in use in the fifteenth century. For long journeys the horse was the normal mode of conveyance. Grain was moved on mules. Big merchants and the king's officials travelled in convoys. In the reign of Fīrūz Tughluq for a distance of ten miles a bullock cart could be had for four to six *jīṭals*,²² a mule for six *jīṭals*, a horse for twelve, and a palanquin for twenty-five. A footman's services could be got for five *tankās* a month.²³ A man could travel from Delhi to Āgrā on horseback with a small escort for one *bahlolī*.²⁴

There were three classes or rungs in Indian society. At the top there were the nobles who had fat salaries and very high incomes. A *khān*, the highest dignitary under the Sultānate, was paid many *lakhs* of *tankās* annually as personal pay. Every noble got from 50,000 to 60,000 *tankās* annually. A *sipah salār* got 20,000 *tankās*. Muhammad bin Tughluq paid his ministers 20,000 to 40,000 *tankās* per year, while other dignitaries like the *sadr-i-jahān* and *shaikh-ul-Islām* were paid 60,000 a year. Fīrūz Tughluq paid his chief-minister a million and a half *tankās*. Merchants, physicians teachers and men of the various professions formed the backbone of the middle class. these were quite prosperous in the Sultānate period. A Jain chronicle refers to the affluent merchants of Anhilwada, capital of the Solanki Kingdom. Marco Polo (1293) mentions those of Malabar. Barbosa and Nuniz take note of the Chettis and Mallayas of Vijaynagara. Poets, philosophers, teachers and

20 *Tārīkh-i-Dāūdī*, 121-2.

21 Shams Sirāj' Afif, *Tārīkh-i-Fīroz Shāhī*, 180 and 295.

22 A *jīṭal* is somewhat less than a pice.

23 A *tankā* is almost equal to a rupee.

24 Equal to about 1/40 of a silver *tankā*.

other learned men were patronised by the Sultāns and given cash or land grants. Thus Amīr Khusrav, the renowned poet was paid 1,000 *tankās* by 'Alā-ud-din. The lowest class comprised the labourers, workers both skilled and unskilled and peasants. Their plight was miserable. All that they could afford to eat was a gruel of rice and pulse (kitchhery). The men wore a short *dhotī*, the women a *sārī* thrown over the head. They slept on a straw mat or *moonj* cot and lived in smoky mud houses with thatched roofs and poor ventilation. 'Afīf the chronicler of Fīrūz Shāh Tughluq, refers to their miserable plight. Many of them, he says, could hardly afford to maintain their families and could only wish for death to release them from their sufferings.

UNDER THE MUGHALS

Agriculture

Then as now India's economy was predominantly rural. Though towns and capitals which were haunts of urban living were the main centres of attention, the Mughal emperors could not afford to neglect the villages where seventy-five per cent of the people lived. But they left them much as they were. The old institutions, like the *Panchayāts* continued. They looked to the local affairs and settled disputes. The only thing the Mughal emperors bothered themselves about in the villages was the collection of land revenue. The demand was high, being one-third of the produce under Akbar, and rising to almost a half during Aurangzīb's reign. The revenue staff also maintained law and order and provided recruits to the army. Thus the object of village administration was more or less to provide the much needed financial resources. Abu-'I-Fazl tries to justify the high incidence of revenue by pointing out that many miscellaneous cesses and taxes were abolished. But it is by no means certain that the Imperial officers did not realise them despite the royal orders.

There was not much pressure on land in the villages. In fact there was so much land available for cultivation that the government had to persuade peasants to farm more. The old

methods of irrigation by river, tank, or wells, were adopted. Bābur found no canals. The Persian wheel system by which water is drawn up from a well by small buckets tied together is mentioned by him. Later on Akbar got the canal made in Firūz Tughluq's time which had gone out of use, re-dug. A new channel sixty miles long from Delhi to Safidun was made by Shāh Jahān. Animal manure was used, and there was intensive ploughing. Farmers were aware of rotation of crops and multiple cropping. Usually there were two crops in the year, *kharīf* and *rabī*.

A number of foodgrains were grown, the chief of which were wheat and rice. Others were barley, gram, millets, linseeds and pulses. Wheat was grown in Āgrā, Allahābād, Avadh, Delhi, Lahore, Multān, Mālwa, Ajmer and Qandahār. Rice was found particularly in Bengal Orissā, Bihār, Āgrā, Avadh, Allahābād, Delhi, Lahore, Khāndesh, Berār and Kāshmir. There were many fine varieties—*Kar*, *Sukhdās*, *shali*, *madhkar* and *jhanwār*. Bengal was the biggest producer. Next to it was Bihār. Avadh produced much rice which the '*Āin-i-Akbarī*' says was of 'whiteness, delicacy, fragrance and wholesomeness unmatched'.²⁵ Abu-'I-Fazl also praises Bihār rice. 'Its quality and quantity' he says, is rarely to be equalled.²⁶ Khāndesh and Kāshmir also produced fine quality rice. Millets which formed the *kharīf* crop consisted of cheap grains like *bājṛā*, *jowār*, *kodōn*, *sāwān*, *manduā* and so forth. The chief pulses were *moong*, *moth*, *urd* or *māsh*, *arhar*, *lōbiā* and peas. Other important produce were cotton, wool, silk, indigo, sugar-cane, poppy (for opium), paper, gum lac, vegetables and fruit and forest yeild.

Textiles

Cotton was widely grown. There were looms in almost every village for manufacturing cloth. A lot of cotton cloth and a number of cotton goods were exported. Cloth found a market in Burma. Cotton goods were exported to Persia, Tatar, and

25 '*Āin-i-Akbarī*', II, 181.

26 *Ibid.*, II, 164.

Turkey, Syria, Barbary, Arabia, Ethiopia and other countries.²⁷ There was a great demand for Indian cotton cloth in the eastern countries of Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Borneo, Arakan, Pegu, Siam, Bantam and so forth. Indian calicoes were greatly popular in England. According to Moreland's estimate the annual export of cotton goods in the seventeenth century was nearly 8,000 bales of which 4,700 went to European countries.²⁸

Other cloth produced in India was silk, woollens, taffetas, brocades, muslin, embroidered cloth (*kinārī*) *tussar* and other textiles. The muslin of Daccā was known the world over. There were many varieties.²⁹ A dress made out of this cloth could be passed through a signet ring. Sonārgāon produced some of the finest qualities. A piece of its muslin fetched as much as four thousand rupees. The Deccan produced a kind of cloth known as *Khāsā*. Another fabric was the *chiken* of Lāhore and of Lucknow. Chintz was made in Burhanpur and Masulipatam. A kind of red chintz and *sālū* cloth was made in Sirhind. Calicut, Samana, Sultānpur, Pulicat, Luknow and Jaunpnr were other places famous for textiles.

Silk was produced in many places in India, and a good deal of it was exported. Akbar encouraged the industry, and Ahmadābād Kāshmir and some parts of Bengal and Bihār including the city of Patnā produced good silk. In the reigns of Shāh Jahān and Jahāngīr the silk industry made great progress. Many bales of it were sent out from Cossimbazar in Bengal. Tavernier says 'The Hollanders usually carry away six or seven thousand bales, and would carry away more if the merchants of Tartary and the Mughal empire did not oppose them; for they buy up as much as Hollanders, the

27 Ludovico di Varthema, *Travels*, (trans. Hakluyt Society), 1863.

28 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, 1923.

29 *Gaigājāl* produced at Barbakābād (near Rājshāhī) 2. *mulmal khās* (king's muslin) 3. *sarkār-i-ālī* (muslin for the *nawāb's* use 4. *āb-i-rawān* (running water) 5. *shabnam* (evening dew) 6. *famdani* (figured muslin). Besides this Lucknow produced *daryābādī* and *mercools*. The *sironj* cloth of calicut was so fine that even when one wore many layers of it failed to cover one's nakedness. Some of the pieces of figured muslins cost as much as £ 56 a piece.

rest the natives keep to make their stuffs.³⁰ Carpets and satins used silk and gold thread. A kind of silk stuff called *patole* was manufactured in Surāt and Ahmadābād. This was extremely thin and had flowers of many patterns on it. Another centre of the silk industry was Veetapur, about eighteen leagues from Āgrā. Banaras (Vārānasī) produced beautiful and expensive silk cloth. Embroidered cloth, silver thread (*kinārī*) and other such material was made in Gujarāt. Cambay silks were much sought after. Many fine silk garments were produced in Assam where tribes such as the Khāsīs, Nāgās, Manipurīs and Bados were employed in the trade. In the south Coimbatore was a prominent silk producing centre. Raw silk was produced in Allahābād, Delhi, Siālkot and in Banaras, Gujarāt Bengal and Kāshmir.

Although the finest quality wool was imported from Tibet and other countries, it was also an extensive Indian product. In early Mughal times shawls and other costly woollens came from Kāshmir. Akbar patronised the industry, and it soon spread to the Punjāb and many other parts of India. Kābul, Kāshmir, west Rājasthān, Āgrā, Fathpur Sikrī and Bengal were centres of the wool trade. A light shawl of mixed silk and wool known as *māyān* was made in Lahore. Kāshmirī shawls were soft and warm, and Akbar gave the name *parma narma* for the finest ones (*parma* = greatly; *narma* = soft). Carpets were made in Āgrā and Fathpur Sikrī. The '*ius*' animal, says Abu-'l-Fazl, provides fine wool of red, black and white colours. According to Bernier shawls made of it were available from fifty to a hundred and fifty rupees in Shāh Jahān's reign. Rough woollens which middle class people could afford were made in Āgrā, Fathpur Sikri and Bengal. Woollen blankets were produced in many places. An ordinary one could be had for ten *dāms* (a quarter of a rupee) in the time of Akbar. Other centres of the wool industry were Jaunpur Burhanpur, Alwar and Amritsar.

A cloth akin to silk, but cheaper was known as *tussar*. This was particularly manufactured in Orissā. European travellers describe it as 'a grass cloth looking like silk.'

Along with textiles there was the industry of dyeing and calico printing. People liked bright colours. Indigo was obtained in large quantities from Lahore to Avadh. Delhi was reputed for dyeing work. Other important centres were Āgrā, Ahmadābād Lucknow, Farrukhābad and Masulipatām. Dyes were got from Sarkhej (in Gujarāt) and Golcondā. Indian textiles were known the world over. Speaking of the silk and cotton industry in Bengal alone, Bernier wrote. 'There is in Bengal such a quantity of cotton and silk, that the kingdom may be called the common storehouse for these two kinds of merchandise, not of Hindustān or the Empire of the Great Mughal only, but of all the neighbouring kingdoms, and even of Europe.'³¹

Indigo

Indigo was largely used in India for washing and bleaching cotton cloth. Indigo dye was in great demand in foreign countries. The best indigo was grown at Bayana in Bharatpur district and the second best at Sarkhej in Gujarāt.³² It formed the main item of export, and the main markets were Bayana and Ahmadābād. Sir Thomas Roe says 'it was the prime commodity.' It was an important article of commerce in the seventeenth century. In Akbar's time the price of Bayana indigo was ten to twelve rupees a maund. It was exported to Turkey and Europe. The Dutch and the English traded in indigo particularly. After Aurangzīb's reign trade declined because of bad harvests and the disturbed political condition. Apart from the main producing areas of Bayana and Ahmadābād, indigo was also produced in Sind, Gujarāt, Aligarh, Khurja, Itimādpur (near Āgrā) and in the Deccan. Bengal became an important indigo growing area in the seventeenth century and the Dutch transported it from Masulipatam.

Sugar and sugar-cane

During Akbar's reign Bengal occupied the first place in the

31 Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, Constable, 1914, p. 439.

32 Bayana indigo was considered to be the best in Europe (Foster, *Early Travels in India*, 190-2).

production of sugar from sugar-cane and from palm trees. In the middle of the seventeenth century sugar began to be exported abroad. Bernier says, 'Bengal sugar in large quantity is supplied to Golcondā and carnātic where very little is grown to Arabia and Mesopotamia through the towns of Mecca and Basara, and even to Persia by Bandar Abbas. Bengal is famous for sweetmeats, especially in places inhabited by the Portugese, who are skilful in the art of preparing them and these are the articles of considerable trade.'³³ Three kinds of sugar-cane, viz., *paunda*, black and ordinary, are mentioned by Abu-'l-Fazl. These were grown in the provinces of Āgrā, Allahābād, Avadh, Lāhore, Multān, Mālwa and Ajmer.³⁴ Sugar of unrivalled whiteness was manufactured at Bayana and sugarcandy at Kālpi.³⁵ Sugar-cane was also cultivated in the country between Āgrā and Lāhore. Chhatarman mentions that juicy black canes each yielding five seers of juice, were grown in the Aurangābād province.³⁶

Poppy

Poppy cultivation was undertaken in the provinces of Āgrā, Avadh, Allahābād, Delhi, Lāhore, Multān, Mālwa, Ajmer, Ahmadnagar Bijāpur, Golcondā and the Deccan. Mālwa opium was considered to be exceptionally good. There was great demand for opium in Bengal and east India. It was exported to Pegu. Poppy cultivation was highly taxed in Akbar's time.

Metalwork

Various metals such as iron, brass, silver, zince mica and so forth were known. Iron was used for making crucibles, armour, guns, canon-balls, bows and arrows, agricultural implements and hulls of ships. The art of making steel was known, and it was used in manufacturing swords and spears which were

33 Bernier, *Travels*, 435.

34 *Āin-i-Akbari*, II, 78-117.

35 *Ibid.*, 192.

36 Chhatarman, *Chhabar Gulshan*, 53.

in great demand in Arabia and Persia. The blades of Damascus which won renown were, in fact, made of Indian steel. In the eleventh century swords were made in Banaras Saurashtra, Āgrā and Kālīñjar. Later on Lahore, Siālkot, Multān and Gujarāt and Golcondā acquired prominence. The daggers bows and arrows of Gujarāt and the matchlocks of Siālkot and Mewār were famous.

Goldsmiths, silver smiths and workers in bronze and other metals, carried on a busy trade. Banaras, Delhi, Āgrā and Gujarāt were renowned for their beautiful inlaid ornaments and exquisite gold and silver vessels. Tīmūr was so much impressed with these craftsmen that he took away some of them to enrich his capital of Samarqand. The industry was perfected in the age of Shāh Jahān. Gold and silver were obtainable locally as well as from abroad in exchange for the large number of exports. Indian merchants insisted on getting these precious metals in return for their goods. Sir Thomas Roe complained that Europe bleedeth to enrich Asia'. Jewellery was used by kings and nobles to bedeck themselves. It was also used in temples, particularly in the south. Assam had excellent jewellers. Gold and silver receptacles were made in Bīdar for keeping betels. Gujarāt was famous for pen-holders small boxes and so forth.

Banaras was known for manufacture of copper, brass or bell metal vessels. Copper wares were also made in Delhi and Lucknow. Copper was used in alloys for making guns and cannons. It was the constituent of copper coins (*dāms*) in use throughout the medieval period. The main supply of copper was from mines in the Singhbhum district of Bihār. Copper was obtained at Kumāon, Bairat, Udaipur. Rājasthan and other places. There were copper mines in Raipori and near Narnol.

Paper—The large number of beautiful manuscripts, the royal *farmāns* and account keeping by prosperous merchants is enough proof of the existence of the paper industry in the Mughal period. The industry was, however, indigenous and on a small scale so as to cater for local needs. The men engaged in paper making could be found on the outskirts of provincial capitals or of big towns. Their locality was known as the Kāghazi Mohallā (*kāgaz*=paper; *mohallā*=area or locality).

Amīr Khusrav (1253-1325) refers to the manufacture in Delhi

of Syrian (Shami) paper. This had two varieties, plain and silken. Mahuan, a Chinese traveller who came to Bengal in the reign of Sultān Ghiyās-ud-dīn 'Āzam Shāh (1389-1409) noticed a white glossy paper manufactured from the barks of a tree. The paper industry was located mainly in Patnā, Delhi, Rājgir, Avadh, Ahmadābād, Gayā, Shahzādpur (near Allahābād) and Siālkot. The royal workshops also produced some paper. The best quality of paper was from Kāshmir. This had a silky texture and a glossy appearance. Another kind was Mānsinghī. This was prized for its silken smoothness, whiteness and durability. Ornamental paper was required for royal *farmāns*. Scholars, merchants, brokers and scholars needed durable quality paper. Thick paper boards were required for binding registers. The art of papier-mache was developed in Mughal times. Beautiful paintings were made in the traditional style.

Leather Industry—There was a great demand for leather goods in these times, particularly saddles and bridles for horses, scabbards for swords, shoes and leather jars or water containers (*mashks*). Some leather articles were also exported to Arabia. Leather was used in Bengal for packing sugar before sending it out abroad. A number of leather goods were manufactured in Sind and Delhi. There were a number of shoe-makers in Delhi in the Qarolbāgh area. A number of Muslims were engaged in making leather jars. Leather mats embroidered in gold and silver were made in Gujarāt. Cambay was famous for its sandals. Assam, where oxen and deer were extensively found, was also a centre of the leather industry.

Glass—Glass was known and used in India from ancient times and glass vessels are mentioned in the writings of the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Bangles, beads flasks and bowls of glass were manufactured in the Deccan in the time of the Bahmanī Sultāns. During the Mughal period various articles of glass were made, such a cut-ware bottles bowls for *hukkās*, dish-covers, spittoons mirrors and spectacles. The main centres of the glass industry were Āgrā, Bihār, Gujarāt, Chitoor, Bellary and Bālāghāt. Good quality mirrors, however, could not be made in India. There was a great demand among kings and nobles for them, and they were largely imported from abroad.

Salt

Apart from the sea, salt was obtained from the Sambhar lake in Rājasthān and the Rarn of Cutch, and from the rock-salt in the Punjāb. A little of it was obtained from the salt mines of Thatta, Ayodhyā and Multān.³⁷ On the salt excavated from the Punjāb salt-range (called Koh-i-Juda by Abu-'I-Fazl) the Mughal government charged a customs duty of one rupee for every seventeen maunds.³⁸ Salt was quite cheap in Mughal times. In Akbar's reign it was less than five *dāms* per maund.

Saltpetre

This was used for making gun-powder, and so had a good foreign market. A lot of it went to Europe. This largest supply came from Lonār in Berār. Āgrā and Patnā were also bulk suppliers. A big dump of saltpetre was maintained at Ahmadābād. The Dutch imported a lot of Indian saltpetre. They opened a ware-house near Patnā and after refining the material carried it to Hooghly. The export of saltpetre was something new in Indian trade of these times.

Saffron

Exclusive to Kāshmir, saffron was a costly article, a seer of it costing ten rupees in those distant times. About four hundred maunds was produced every year. It was used as a dye and for flavouring and giving fragrance to food. The state tax on it was heavy, almost fifty per cent. A curious system was followed for paying the labourers who picked saffron flowers. They got salt equivalent to half the weight of the flowers picked. This was perhaps because salt was a rare commodity in Kāshmir then.

Spices

The chief spices were cardamom, ginger, pepper, nutmegs cloves

37 Sujan Rai, *Khulasāt-ul-Tawārīkh*, 26,34,56.

38 *'Āin-i-Akbarī*, II, p. 249.

and cinnamom. Cardamom was grown in Bijāpur. It was expensive, the price varying from 52 to 80 *dāms* per seer. Pepper was extensively grown in Bijāpur, Malabar, Cochin, Bihār (in the Champāran district), Bengal (Mahmudābād district) Assam and Bantum. It was exported to Ormuz, Basra and the countries round the Red Sea. Cloves and nutmegs were exported by the Dutch to Europe from Surāt. The Portugese were particularly interested in pepper. They collected huge quantities of pepper and other spices from Sumatra. At Quilon they had a great store of pepper, from where they exported it to Europe. Ralph Finch says 'All the pepper of Calicut and coarse cinnamon too grows here (at Cochin) in this country. The best cinnamon does come from Ceylon'. Ginger was grown abundantly all over the country. The costliest spice was clove which sold a sixty *dāms* a seer. Cardamoms were fifty-two *dāms*, cinnamom forty. The cheapest were coriander at three *dāms* for a seer, ginger four *dāms* and aniseed and cuminseed two each.

Tobacco

Tobacco was unknown in India till the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when the Portugese made it popular. From then it picked up and became a favourite. Fostering an attitude much ahead of his age, Jahāngīr tried to ban its use. But he did not succeed. Tobacco cultivation became so widespread that by 1623 it was exported from Surāt. Reaching the Coromandel Coast it began to be sent out to Mocha, Arakan and Pegu. Bengal had a great demand for tobacco, and farmers began to grow it despite having to pay the state a heavy duty. Tobacco was universally popular. It knew no communal barriers. Hindus and Muhammadans smoked their *hukkās* in peace. Women joined heartily in it. It was a way of cheerfulness and a device to obtain freedom. While a prisoner at Multān Manrique bribed his guards with 'money for tobacco'. Mughal India had discovered 'sublime tobacco!'

'Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe'.³⁹

Gum lac

This was obtained from the bark of certain trees. It was used for making toys and bangles, varnishing furniture and so forth. A bright scarlet colour obtained from it was used for painting cloth. It was made into sticks of wax. Lac was an export item. The Dutch exported it to Persia for red colour. The English and the Dutch we are told 'carried away every year a hundred and fifty chests of it at ten pence per pound.'⁴⁰ High priced gum lac came from Bengal and Pegu. A great deal of it was found in Mālwa especially in the jungles of Dhār.

Tiles

The important centres of the tile industry were at Lahore, Multān and Sind. Glazed tiles were used for decorating palaces in the Mughal age. Many buildings in Lāhore, Āgrā and Delhi used them.

Shipbuilding

The commercial merchant ships of Mughal times were renowned and efficient. Three to four hundred of them plied between Cambay and Goa and over two hundred sailed southward from Goa. Some of these ships weighed a thousand tons or even more. One of them, the Rahimi, was of fifteen hundred ton's weight. There were about fifty thousand boats in Bengal alone.

Surāt was the main centre of the shipbuilding industry. Madapallam and Narsapur were places where repairs to faulty or damaged vessels were carried out. Other places where boats and ships were made were, Srinagar, Lāhore, Āgrā, Multān, Wazīrābād, Allahābād, Masulipatam, Pulicat, Bassein, Goa, Broach, Diu, Nosāri, Dāccā and Chittagong. Indian ships compared favourably with foreign ones in cheapness and durability. The freight cost for goods transported by them was about thirty rupees per ton. This was almost half of what British ships charged.

40 Bernier, *Travels*, II, p. 63.

The Mughal kings had no regular navy. But they did have ships used for warfare. The *kosa* and *jaliā* were fighting vessels which plied mostly on rivers. But certain ships such as the *ganj-i-swai* of Aurangzīb were fitted with eighty cannons and had four hundred match-locks. The Mughal warships, however, were no match for the Arakanese fleet or the foreign ships with which they had to wage war in later years.

Minor Industries

Painted pottery both glazed and unglazed was a flourishing industry of medieval times. Jaipur, Gwālior, Ayodhyā, Banaras, Lucknow, Kāshmir and Delhi were the main centres for this industry. Toys and dolls were scarce because of the Islāmic prohibition against making representations of human figures. The industry flourished, however, under Hindu kings, in Mysore and Vijayanagara. Rare perfumes of many kinds were made. The '*Āin-i-Akbarī*' gives a list of scents. *Araq-i-sewati*, *araq-i-chamelī*, *mosseri* and *amber-i-ashab* were considered among the best. Akbar created a special perfumery department known as *khusabu-khānā*, of which Pelsaert says: 'They studied night and day how to make exciting perfumes and efficacious preserves such as *mosseri* or *falroj* containing amber, pearls, gold, amboa, opium and other stimulants.'⁴¹ Nūr Jahān's mother prepared a perfume from roses which she called *ltar-i-Jahāngirī*. Of it the emperor wrote 'It is of such a strength in perfume that if a drop of it is rubbed on the palm of the hand it scents the whole assembly. There is no scent of equal excellence'.⁴² Superior perfumes were produced in Lāhore, Balsar, Cambay and Banāras. Oil was made from coconut, *gingili*, sesamum and castor seed. Soap (*sābun*) was known right from early times. Gurū Nānak's *Japajī Sāhib* has a reference to it: 'when clothes get dirty, wash them with soap'. The '*Āin*' says 'These mountains (*Lenar*) produce all the requisites for making glass and soap'.⁴³

41 Pelsaert's *India*, p. 65.

42 *Tuzūk-i-Jahāngirī*, trans. Rogers and Beveridge, I, p. 271.

43 '*Āin-i-Akbrī*', trans. Gladwin, I, p. 348.

In his report on Portuguese forts and settlements (1644), Bocarro mentions '*sabas*' i.e. soap.⁴⁴

Stone work was another industry in Kāshmir. Beautiful wood-work and carvings of wood were also handicrafts there. Mats baskets and bamboo work were produced in Sind and Kāshmir. Multān and Delhi were famous for ivory work. Bangles, bracelets, chess-boards and chess-men were made of ivory. Beads of ivory inlaid with gold are mentioned by Nuniz who visited Vijayanagara. Siālkot Lāhore and Sind produced damask work.

TRADE UNDER THE MUGHALS

Foreign Trade

A marked feature of the Mughal period was the opening up of the sea routes for trade. Early in the seventeenth century many of the Indian goods were exported to foreign countries by the land routes through Qandahār and Kābul. But after the coming of the Europeans the importance of these routes was reduced even though they continued to exist. Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. After this almost for a century from 1500 to 1600 the Portuguese monopolised Indian trade, practically eliminating the Arabs from the field. Their principle factories were at Pulicat, Qāsimbazār, Patnā, Balasore, Cochin and Najapattam. The Dutch entered into Indian trade in 1603. A Dutch agency was in existence in Surāt in 1606. But the Coromandel coast was of greater importance because of cotton goods and spices. A trade agreement was made between the Dutch and the king of Golcondā. Factories were established near Tegnapatam (Fort St. David). But the most important development was the grant to the Dutch by the king of Chandragiri of a site in Pulicat. They established a prominent factory there which became the headquarters of all their business on the coast. The English made their first voyage in 1601 with ships laden with cloth, tin, lead, cutlery, quicksilver and hides. They settled at Masulipattam

44 India Office M.S. No. 197, Bocarro, XIII, p. 588.

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and Petapoli in 1611. In the beginning, however, they could not effectively compete with the Dutch who had a bigger market than their's in the Far East. While Masulipatam remained the headquarters of the English in the north Pulicat was established a trade centre in the South (1621). In 1626 they moved to Armagon at the northern end of the Pulicat lagoon, after being allowed by the local chief to establish themselves there. Armagon was not wholly suitable and in 1640 the factors managed to get a foothold in Madras, again by agreement with the chief (nāyak) of that area. This arrangement continued throughout the Mughal period. The Dutch were at Pulicat, the English at Madras; while both companies maintained factories at Masulipatam and other places. The French established their factories at Surāt (1668) Pondicherry (1673) Chandernagore (1690-2) and at Masulipatam. They appointed agents at other places who approached the Indian workers and craftsmen directly for trade purposes.

The Mughal kings took payment of exported articles in gold and silver. Van Twist says, 'Although there were no gold or silver mines in India, large quantities of both were imported from foreign countries and it was forbidden to export them'.⁴⁵ William Hawkins expressed the same thought when he said 'India is rich in silver for all nations bring coin and carry away commodities for the same and this coin is buried in India and goeth not out'. The bullion imported into India gradually increased from £22,000 in 1601 to £ 8,00,000 by the end of the seventeenth century.⁴⁶ Gold came from the Archipelago, China, Japan, Malacca, rubies from Pegu, pearls and gems from Arabia and Persia. Quicksilver was imported from Lisbon. Europe was the supplier of superior woollens, silk satin and velvet and lead. Broadcloth, lace both plain and of gold and silver thread, mirrors, spices and iron goods were supplied by the Dutch. There was a great demand for Chinese porcelain. Akbar, it is recorded, left behind him crockery worth twenty-five lakhs of rupees. Other imports included costly luxury goods, coral,

45 quoted in *Brij Narain, Indian Economic Life—Past and Present*, 1638.

46 R.K. Mookerji, *Economic History of India*, p. 69.

dried fruits, amber, asafoetida, wines and spirit, and thorough-breds.

Among the exports were cotton cloth, spices, indigo, drugs, gum-lac, rice, sugar, dyed yarn, opium and other articles. From Central Asia and Afghanistan a lot of dried and fresh fruit, rough rubies, amber and asafoetida was obtained. Fruits also came from Kābul and in exchange cloth, rugs, sugar, indigo and medicinal herbs were sent. From Tibet and the Himālayan states there came musk, china-wood, rhubarb, mamiron, jade, fine wool, gold, copper, lead, honey, borax, wax, woollen stuffs, yak's tails and hawks. In return India sent to Tibet white and figured cloths, silk and embroidered stuffs, brocades, scarlet, corals and amber, small diamonds and so forth.⁴⁷ From Nepāl India obtained cattle and horns, musk, borax, *cheerātā* (medicinal herb) madder dye, cardamoms, yaks' tails, furs, hawks and scented grass. India sent to Nepāl textiles, salts, metals, sugar, spices and so forth. From Bhutān came musk and yaks' tails. There was some trade between India and Pegu (Burma). India sent piece goods, yarn and opium, and received from Burma gold, silver and precious stones Thatta (India) traded with Ispahān, It received dried and fresh fruit, wines, carpets, gold ducats, silk and madder in return for cotton goods, indigo and sugar.

The total volume of trade is estimated to be about 54,000 tons. Of this the break up is roughly as follows:

	<i>In tons</i>
Red Sea	10,000
Persia	10,000
Europe	6,000
Africa	1,000
Pegu	5,000
Malaccā and beyond	17,000
Jāvā	2,000
Achin	3,000

India was the overall gainer in foreign trade. This was because

47 H.D. Penna, *Brief Account of the Kingdom of Tibet*, 1730.

foreign nations mostly paid the price of Indian goods in gold. Besides there was an insatiable demand in European countries for muslins and calicoes, both printed and dyed. So much so, that the British parliament had to pass a special statute in 1700 according to which, 'From and after the 29th of September 1701 all wrought silks, Bengals and stuffs mixed with silk or herba, of the manufacture of Persia, China or the East Indies and all calicoes, painted, dyed printed or stained, those which are or shall be imported into this kingdom, shall not be worn or otherwise used in Great Britain, all goods imported after that day shall be warehoused and exported again'.

Internal Trade

Inland trade could not keep pace with trade beyond the seas. In contrast to conditions existing in Hindu kingdoms security in the medieval Muslim states was not conducive to trade. Local officers were tyrannical and oppressive. Roads were not safe. For safety and protection merchants had to move in caravans. In one of his letters Bernier wrote: 'Thus it happens that many of the peasantry, driven to despair by so execrable a tyranny, abandon the country, and seek a more tolerable mode of existence, either in the towns, or camps; as bearers of burdens, carriers of water, or servants to horsemen. Sometimes they fly to the territories of a *rājā*, because there they find less oppression, and are allowed a greater degree of comfort'.⁴⁸

A feature of Mughal rule which acted as a brake on production was the undue interference by royal officers who sometimes appropriated the goods without paying their fair price. Speaking of this tendency Pelsart says, 'They (the merchants) are so oppressed that if the Emperor's nobles or governors should require any of their goods, they must sell them for very little—less than half price'.⁴⁹ 'So much is wrung from the peasants' 'he says that even dry bread is scarcely left to them for their food...the land would give a plentiful, or even an extraordinary

⁴⁸ *Letter to Colbert.*

⁴⁹ Quoted in W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, MacMillan, 1972, p. 200.

yield if the peasants were not so cruelly and pitilessly oppressed'.⁵⁰ The Dutch merchant, van Twist, confirms this, and says that in Gujarāt the peasants were forced to surrender the entire profit of the land, and so the authorities were unable to find enough peasants for work. Tavernier, who travelled between 1640 and 1660 writes about conditions prevailing in the Mughal empire in much the same strain: 'The peasants are reduced to great poverty because if the governors become aware that they possess any property, they seize it straightaway by right or by force. You may see in India whole provinces like deserts, from whence the peasants have fled on account of the oppression of the governors'.⁵¹ It is true we find mention of fabulously rich and prosperous merchants also. Such were the chettis of Coromandel, some of whom owned big ships. Nicolo Conti, an Italian traveller, tells us that one of them had a fleet of forty ships for shipping his own goods. A few merchants like Vīrjī Vārā of Surāt, Shanti Dās Jawahrī of Ahmadābād and Hājī Sayyid Beg, Manōhar Dās and Malay Chetty of Malabar, were more princes than merchants. Vīrjī Vōrā, who became the sole monopolist for all European commodities, was believed to be the richest merchant in the world. But these were lone luminaries. India was then as indeed now, a country of extremes in richness and poverty. The existence of a few prosperous men of this kind cannot be the measure of the economic condition in Mughal times. By and large the peasants and traders were oppressed and, despite the good intentions of Mughal emperors in advancing trade, the rapacity of their officers did not allow the majority of them to flourish.

Another great impediment was the heavy taxes imposed at different places and diverse authorities. Although these were abolished by some Mughal emperors, as for example Akbar, the orders were disregarded by the local officers, and they continued to be realised. Taxes were levied on all big markets and ports at two and a half per cent. Aurangzib raised this to five per cent for Hindus, though for Muslims he abolished it.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

Moreland considers the factors injurious to trade in Mughal times as, delay, over-valuation and compulsory sales.⁵² Delays in clearing goods was chiefly due to the habit of Mughal officials extorting money and bribes. Unless the merchants met their demands their goods were not cleared. Over-valuing goods by officials was a common practice. An English merchant of Surāt wrote, 'Here the governor's will is a law; so that he sets what price he pleaseth on commodities.'⁵³ Merchants were also forced to sell their goods at inadequate prices. English merchants complained that their goods were taken away by the governor and either not paid for at all, or paid for at inadequate rates. The burden of all this was on the tradesman. It was much greater than even the imposts, exorbitant as they were. Moreland says, 'In one way or other, however, money had to be paid, and if we take account of bribes, forced sales, and over-valuation, we shall find that the schedule of duties sinks into insignificance in comparison with the demands which might have been met in practice.'⁵⁴

In spite of the aforesaid limitations trade went on between different regions of the country. Bengal had a regular coastal trade in rice, sugar and butter. These were carried to Karachi. Opium was sent to Kerala, sugar to Gujarāt and wheat to south India. Bengal supplied Patnā wheat, sugar and opium, and obtained instead rice and silk. Āgrā, which was an important centre for export also met indigenous needs. It was famous for the best quality of indigo. Lāhore was famous for carpets, Multān for camels, sugar, opium, cotton goods and sulphur. Gujarāt was known for its excellent textiles. Apart from being exported, these were supplied to other parts of India also, particularly Āgrā. Foreign merchants brought to Gujarāt western luxury goods which were sent from there to the courts of Delhi, Āgrā, Rājasthān and Mālwa. Ajmer and Mālwa supplied Gujarāt wheat and Malabar and the Deccan sent to it rice. Cotton was supplied to Āgrā by Gujarāt. Thatta received from it tobacco and Kerala cotton and yarn. Pulicat made a superior

52 *Ibid.*, p. 274.

53 *Ibid.*, p. 275.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 276.

quality of printed cloth which it sent to Gujarāt and the Malabar coast. Bidar was a famous market for *bidri* ware. This was a composition of copper, lead and tin, on which gold ornaments were inlaid. Sind sent wheat, barley, cotton and horses to different parts of India and got in return rice, sugar-cane, timber and spices. The shawls of Kāshmir were prized and were sold all over India. Āgrā obtained from Kāshmir wool and sulphur. In return Kāshmir imported salt from Gujarāt Rāwalpindī and Ladākh, rice from Burhānpur, wheat, sugar, drugs, broadcloth, mangoes, iron, copper, brass utensils, glassware, gold, silver and luxury goods from all over India. There was trade between Gujarāt and Malabar. The merchants of Malabar carried out coastal trade on the Coromandel coast and traded in Vijayanagara. There was a great demand for gems in the Vijayanagara empire. Diamonds were brought there from the Deccan, pearls from Ormuz and Kayal, Burmese rubies from Pulicat. From Malabar came cloth of different colours, corals, pepper and other commodities. Provincial capitals were flourishing trade markets and goods from all over the country would be offered for sale in them.

Transport

Goods were carried by land as well as by boats and barges on rivers. The roads had shady trees on both sides, resting houses (*sarāis*) at intervals, minarets to guide travellers and drinking water tanks for animals. The services of *bhāṭs* of Rājputanā could be obtained for a small charge for protecting caravans. Transport by river was cheaper, and was resorted to chiefly in Kāshmir, Bengal, Sind and the Punjāb. There was considerable river traffic, particularly along the rivers Yamunā, Gaṅgā and Jhelum.

Famines and their Effect on Trade

Famines occurred due to failure of seasonal rains, floods or depredations caused by war. Fortunately these were localised and did not effect the whole country. None the less they caused great misery and crippled trade. Often foodstuff could not

be rushed to the affected areas. The first famine of the Mughal period occurred in 1555-6, the year of Akbar's accession. This affected Delhi, Āgrā and areas round about. Matters were made worse because an epidemic broke out at the same time. Badāūnī, who witnessed the sufferings of the people says 'Men ate their own kind and the appearance of the famine sufferers was so hideous that one could scarcely look at them. The whole country was a desert and no man lived to till the ground.'⁵⁵ Between 1573 to 1595 there were five famines. These affected Gujarāt (1573), north-west India (1583-4) and Lāhore and Kāshmir (1595). In 1584-5 the Meghna delta was washed away in a huge flood. In 1630 again there was a very severe famine in Gujarāt and the Deccan. This was caused by failure of the rains. Describing the conditions prevailing in this famine, Van Twist says: 'so little rain fell that the seed sown was lost, and no grass grew. Cattle died. In towns and villages, in fields and on the roads, men lay dead in large numbers, causing such a stench that it was terrible to use the ways ... Men deserted their wives and children. Women sold themselves as slaves. Mothers sold their children. Children deserted by their parents sold themselves. Some families took poison and so died together; others threw themselves into the rivers. Mothers and their children went to the river-bank, and drowned themselves hand in hand, so that the rivers flowed full of corpses. Some ate carrion flesh. Others cut up the corpses of men, and drew out the entrails to fill their own bellies; yes, men lying on the streets, not yet dead, were cut up by others, and men fed on living men, so that even in the streets and still more on road journeys, men ran great danger of being murdered and eaten'.⁵⁶ The famine disrupted all trade. Artisans, weavers and distillers perished and departed from the regions of their activity. There was a fall in the price of gold and other imports. Spirits became unprocurable and there was scarcity of cotton goods, indigo and other products. Though the Mughal administration tried their best to relieve the sufferings of the people by opening, public kitchens and distributing gratuitous relief, nothing effective

⁵⁵ *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī, 428-9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

could be done. Peter Mundy observed that no steps were taken to remedy the evil, 'the rich and strong engrossing and taking perforce all to themselves.' The Mughal army was encamped in the north across the route from which grain was to come for those starved, and so its coming was delayed. In 1683 when Aurangzib was conducting an expedition in the Deccan, there was a famine in the Konkan and grain could not be procured. In 1686 a famine occurred in the Deccan when the rains failed. There followed a drought in Gujarāt. In fact between the years 1614 and 1660 there were thirteen such occurrences caused by drought, war or flood. All these resulted in great misery and interruption in trade. The Mughal government did not have the resources to meet these situations. Luckily the famines were localised.

Banking and Insurance

In the early medieval times the villages had money-lenders (*sarāfs*). They had several functions (1) English and foreign companies engaged them to test the purity of metals used in coins, which could be manufactured by authorised goldsmiths apart from the royal mint. (2) They issued *hundīs* or bills of exchange. This procedure enabled transactions in large sums of money without the risk of moving it from one place to another. The *sarāf* would accept a deposit and issue a letter of authority to the depositor, who could get it back at another place of his choice within a specified period by producing the letter to the *sarāf's* agent there. The *sarāf* charged a small percentage as his commission. (3) Short term credit could be raised against security of property or land. The interest was between five to eleven per cent or even higher. The high rate was due to the fact that it included insurance charges for goods against which the *hundī* was drawn. (4) *Sarāfs* were entrusted with large sums of money for safe keeping and on interest. In this capacity they functioned like bankers. Sujān Rāi says 'Even when a stranger and unfamiliar person deposits hundreds of thousands in cash for safe keeping with the *sarāfs* in the absence of any witnesses, these righteous ones repay it on

demand without any evasion or delay.⁵⁷ Thus the *sarāfs* helped to raise short term credits, facilitated remittances of money from one place to another and kept deposits for their patrons. Another function was insurance. The *sarāfs* covered the risk of goods in transit either by land or by sea. There were two kinds of insurance. Either the *sarāf* undertook to convey the goods safely to the place of destination, or he covered only the risk in case they were damaged or lost. The rudiments of a banking and insurance system can be seen in these *sarāfs* or in the village *mahājans*.

Coins

Various coins had been introduced by the Sultāns of the Sultānate period, like the *jital* (equivalent to a pice), the silver *tankā* (devised by Iltutmish) the, *bahlōlī* (which was 1/40 of a *tankā*) introduced by Bahlol Lodī, a copper *tankā* of the time of Sikandar Lodī (twenty making one silver *tankā*), other small coins called *hast kani* (1/8 of a rupee), and the gold *mohur*.

Sher Shāh brought out the Indian silver rupee which was the precursor of the rupee of our times. This weighed one *tolā* and was equal to Iltutmish's *tankā*. He also introduced a copper coin known as the *dām* which was another version of the *bahlōlī* being one fortieth of a rupee. The *dām* was further divided into smaller coins—the *adhelah* (1/2 a *dām*), *paola* (1/4 of a *dām*), *damri* (1/8 of a *dām*) and *jital* (1/25 of a *dām*). There was no debasement in the Mughal rupee or *dām*, for anyone could take bullion to the mint and get it converted into coins for a fee of 5.6 per cent. The value of the coins, therefore, varied with the price of silver or copper in the market. The use of cowries was widespread in Bengal and Orissā. A rupee was equivalent to 2,500-3,200 cowries. A *dām* was equal to the weight of eighty almonds. Ten rupees of those days were equal to a pound sterling.⁵⁸

Income, Wages and Prices—Indian society in Mughal times was divided into various classes. At the top there were the

57 *Khulāsat-ut-Tawārīkh*.

58 D. Pant, *Commercial Policy of Moghuls*.

nobles who were given high salaries, from fifty to sixty thousand *tankās* annually. These were less in the times of Shāh Jahān and Aurangzīb.⁵⁹ High dignitaries got about the same pay. These salaries were subject to various deductions such as *waza-i-dām-i-chauthāi* (deduction of one fourth in *dāms*) and *rasad-i-khurāk* (feeding the animals), particularly during the reigns of Shāh Jahān and Aurangzīb. The nobles and dignitaries also carried on private trade and speculation on their own and accumulated fabulous fortunes. Mīr Jumla Shāh Jahān's prime-minister was a merchant prince. Shāista Khān *subadār* of Bengal in 1672 traded in betel-nuts. He had a treasure of thirty-eight *crores*, and his daily income was about two *lakh* of rupees. Next to the nobles, the *zamindārs* and chiefs had huge incomes. Most Mughal emperors fixed specific sums which they expected as revenue from a particular estate or principality. The *zamindārs* had to pay this amount to the royal treasury. For the rest they were free to realise as much as they could. These realisations were more in the nature of exactions. Besides the *zamindārs* and chiefs imposed additional cesses and *abwabs* such as poll tax, house tax, and cesses on marriages and births. The *zamindārs* kept their own employees for making these collections. They also maintained their own troops, which according to the *Āin* exceeded forty *lakhs* in all. Merchants who were engaged in lucrative trade, were prosperous and lived luxurious lives. This was so both in the Sultānate period as well as in Mughal times. Marco Polo, who came to India in 1293, noticed the wealth of the merchants of Malabar. Barbosa and Nuniz both speak of the prosperity of the Chettis and Mallayas of Vijayanagara, who wore costly ornaments of gold and precious stones and lived in spacious houses. Manrique (1628-43) found the brokers and traders of Patnā very rich. Writing about the merchants of Daccā and Āgrā he says, 'they possessed huge sums of money piled up like heaps of grains in their houses.' The merchants of Goa, Surāt and the Coromandel coast were equally rich. Vīrjī Vōrā was so influential that even the powerful East India Company took loans from him so as to keep him humoured. Jagat Seth was one of the richest

59 About ten to fourteen thousand *tankās*.

merchants of Bengal. The *marwārīs* of Rājasthān amassed huge fortunes. Another class which enjoyed prosperity, though not so much as the nobles and high officers, were the smaller *mansabdārs* having commands of less than 200. A commander of one hundred troops was paid seven hundred rupees per month in Akbar's time. Those who could keep no troops got five hundred rupees. Then there were the learned professions like teachers, philosophers grammarians, poets and so forth. They received allotments of land and grants of pensions. A number of renowned men of culture, vaids and *hakīms* (physicians) were attached to courts and were recipients of royal favour. Court astrologers received large salaries and honorariums. Workers, skilled and unskilled, artisans, inferior servants and petty professions like barbers, washermen etc., formed the poor and unprivileged classes who had to be content with low wages and miserable lives. The 'Āīn mentions the wage of ordinary labourers as two to three *dāms* a day (i.e. 3 to 4 pice). A slave was paid one *dām* (2 pice) and common workers like stone masons, workers in lime etc., five to seven *dāms* (i.e. 10-14 pice). A brick layer got a daily wage of three *dāms* (6 pice) and a water-carrier two to three *dāms* (4 to 6 pice). In Jahāngīr's time these wages were doubled. Petty officials like flag-bearers, orderlies *farāshes* and so forth, got wages at a somewhat higher rate.⁶⁰ Peter Mundy (1628-34) mentions that artisans and weavers had to bear numerous deductions from whatever wages they earned. Thus nineteen per cent were cut off on a piece of cloth, brokerage on the unbleached piece and further brokerage of five pice on it, of which two went to the governor, two to the broker and one to the merchant. The poor weaver hardly got a decent profit. The governors and other officers paid what they liked for work done for them. If the worker protested, he was flogged. They frequently extorted money from merchants. Mīr Jumla once demanded Rs. 50,000

60 An orderly got Rs 3 per month, a washerman Rs 4, a *kahār* (washer of utensils) Rs 3, a *farāsh* (who cleaned and opened and locked up rooms) Rs 4, a flag-bearer Rs 2-50 and a *masālchī* (torch bearer) Rs 2. (Daccā Factory Records, 1745).

from the merchants of Dāccā, and threatened to have them trampled by elephants if they did not pay. Soldiers were paid at the rate of Rs. 25 per month for Turānīs and Persians and Rs. 20 for Hindustānīs.

There was a wide gulf between the nobles and *zamindārs* and other classes. The labourers and inferior servants barely got subsistence wages. True because of low prices they did not starve, except in times of drought and famine, as some historians have observed;⁶¹ still it cannot be said that they had a share in the oft mentioned glories of the Mughal empire.

Prices—No real comparison can be made between the wages existing in Mughal times and those which now exist, because of the steep decline in the purchasing power of money. A daily wage of about 3 to 4 pice⁶² was enough in Mughal times to feed oneself. Considering the low prices of foodgrains and other commodities, living was not difficult. The English traveller Thomas Coryat (1612-17) wrote home that twelve pounds of his money were enough for a three year's stay. Two hundred pounds weight of sugar could be got by just seven or eight annas in 1628. Poet Mukundarām touches on the cheapness of commodities in his work *Chandikāyya* when he records all that a maid-servants, Dhurbālā brought from the market for about ten rupees, when she went out shopping. The list included a long ground of pumpkin, green pumpkin gourds, a big *rōhū* fish, and other varieties of fish such as sheat and *chital*, 641 lobsters, a castrated goat and mustard oil. The poet also mentions that the marriage of Kalāketu, a hunter, was celebrated at that time within the paltry sum of half a pice! Prices varied slightly from one part of the country to another. Foodgrains were cheaper in Bengal than in northern India, and cheaper in northern India than in Gujarāt and other parts of India. As mentioned in the *Āin* the average prices of the principal foodgrains towards the end of Akbar's reign calculated on the basis of 82.3 pound's weight equivalent to a maund, were: wheat 133.3 seers for a rupee, barley 200 seers,

61 *History and Culture of the India People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974, Vol VII, p. 735.

62 about a *dām* and a half.

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rice 54.2 seers, gram 135.6 seers, *bājṛā* 182.8 seers and *jowār* 108.5 seers.⁶³ On the basis of the maund's weight as in Akbar's time ($55\frac{1}{2}$ pounds) a maund of *ghee* could be got for 105 *dāms*, oil for 80 *dāms*, milk for 25 *dāms*, and brown sugar for 53 *dāms*.⁶⁴ The prices of ordinary cloth of different kinds were: *chhint* cloth two *dāms* per yard, *gazzi* $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ *dāms* per piece *dupattā* a rupee a piece, *silahati* two to four *dāms* per yard.⁶⁵

Standard of Living

Accounts of the conditions prevailing in the Mughal empire are strangely conflicting. Foreign writers highlight the grandeur of royal courts and Indian cities. Paes praises the cities of the south. Father Monserrate extols the wealth of Āgrā and Fathpur Sīkrī. About Āgrā he says, 'All the necessities and conveniences of human life can be obtained here if, desired. This is even true of the articles that have to be 'imported from distant corners of Europe. There are great numbers of artisans, iron-workers and goldsmiths. Gems and pearls abound in large number. Gold and silver are plentiful, as also are horses from Persia and Tartary. Indeed the city is flooded with vast quantity of every type of commodity. Hence Āgrā is seldom visited by dearth of food supplies.'⁶⁶ About Lāhore the traveller says 'this city is next to none, either in Asia or in Europe in regard to its size, population and wealth.'⁶⁷ Ralph Fitch and William Finch also speak of the general prosperity of the places they visited. The Italian traveller, Careri wrote: 'The great men have noble structures, with several courts, and the tops of the houses flat to take the air, and fountains with carpets above them to sit and receive visits from friends.' On the other hand we have descriptions of the object misery of the common people. 'Afīf says of the miserable plight of the people in the times of

63 *Āin-i-Akbarī*, I, p. 65; Mookerji, *Economic History of India*, p. 86. The weight of the maund in Akbar's time was, however, $55\frac{1}{2}$ pounds.

64 *Āin-i-Akbarī*, I, p. 67.

65 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

66 *Commentarius*, 34-6.

67 *Ibid.*, 159.

Firūz Shah Tughluq, that many of them could hardly afford to maintain their families and could only wish for death to release them from their sufferings. 'So much is urung from the peasants,' wrote the Dutch factor at Āgrā in 1616 'that even dry bread is scarcely left to them.' Bernier and Tavernier point out the miserable condition of the peasants. Pelsart the chief of the Dutch factory at Āgrā further says 'the life of the people cannot be adequately depicted or described, for here is the home of stark want and the dwelling place of bitter woe.' Bernier says in his *Letter to Colbert*: 'No adequate idea can be conveyed of the sufferings of the people. The cudgel and the whip compel them to incessant labour for the benefit of others.' Tavernier who travelled in Mughal India between 1640 and 1660, tells us, 'The peasants are reduced to great poverty because if the governors become aware that they possess any property, they seize it straightaway by right or by force. You may see in India whole provinces like deserts, from whence the peasants have fled on account of the oppression of the governors'.

It is difficult to reconcile these contradictory views except if we suppose that these foreign travellers were seeing the two faces of the same coin. In fact both of them were right. They were describing only what their stay in India gave them an opportunity to see. India has always been a land of contrasts, and the Mughal age could be no exception. Even today we have affluence on the one hand and starvation on the other. A fair distribution of wealth has remained till now for India a dream. In the early years it could have been possible but for the rapacity of those in power and the possessiveness of human nature. Gradually a stage has been reached when even with the most pious intentions it is well nigh impossible. For wealth to be evenly distributed there must of necessity be enough of it to go round. And there must be a reasonable limit on the numbers of those who are there to share it. We find the same story of object poverty and glorious superfluity in Mughal times. On the one hand people just managed to keep alive. On the other there were feasts of the nature given by an army officer at Gaur, as described by Sebastian Manrique: 'The dinner then commenced with great propriety and abundance. After numerous dishes of various kinds of flesh both of domesticated

and wild animals and birds with stimulants of sundry *achārs* (pickles), they brought different kinds of sweets, made after their own fashion,...and then followed every kind of dried fruit produced by these countries. After a weary three hours we arose from the table'. Āsaf Khān gave a fabulous dinner to Sir Thomas Roe, who tells us that sometimes more than fifty dishes were served at a nobleman's table. A noble had a number of wives; indeed a sixteenth century poet, Vijradās, mentions a *zāmindār*, Hasan, as having one hundred. Each was provided with separate apartments with her own retinue of attendants, slave girls and eunuchs numbering ten, twenty or sometimes even a hundred. The nobles spent lavishly. Daud Khān, for example, spent 2,50,000 rupees annually on his pet animals. This was how a handful of people lived. But the majority, the peasants who formed seventy-five per cent of the population, the labourers and artisans, in brief those who really worked, lived dreary lives full of darkness and misery. Although Moreland has been criticised by some historians for taking a too dismal view about the wretchedness of the vast majority of people in Mughal times he is substantially right when he says 'It is safe to say that a relatively large number of producers contributed half their gross income to the support of a relatively small number of economic parasites....He (the peasant) bore the brunt of the struggle with natural forces, but he could hope to retain no appreciable portion of the spoils, which were employed in maintaining a few parasites in luxury, and a much greater number in a life of comparative security'.⁶⁸ Of the great industry and hard labour of the people, there can be no doubt. But the state's role was none too laudable. Workers were not given fair price for their goods, and quite often they were forced into the king's service. Weavers were pressed to make muslin for Imperial courts. Labourers were forced to work on the grand buildings undertaken by Mughal emperors like the mosque at Daulatābād which took ten *lakhs* to construct, the palace of Delhi which cost sixty *lakhs* and the Tāj Mahal which took up the colossal sum of nine hundred and seventeen lakhs. Francisco Pelsart the chief of the Dutch factory at Agrā, wrote, 'The

68 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, 1972, pp. 303-4.

second scourge is the oppression of governor, nobles, *dīwan kotwāl*, *bakshī*, and other Imperial officers. If one of these wants a workman, the man is not asked if he is willing to come, but is seized in his house or in the street, well beaten if he should dare to raise any objection, and in the evening,⁶⁹ paid half his wages, or perhaps nothing at all. The grandeur of the Mughal empire was built by the blood and sweat of the poor. If one considers people in general, economic prosperity was at a low level. No one starved, but it would perhaps be too much to claim that 'In spite of these drawbacks (faulty distribution and governmental extortion) it could hardly be said that the people in that age were unhappy.'⁷⁰

INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY AT THE END OF THE EIGHTEEN CENTURY

The Trend of Industry

English writers of history, like Moreland, and foreign visitors from Europe, have laid much emphasis on the exploitation of trade by Mughal emperors and Imperial officers. At the same time they seem to think that the English exercised a benign influence on Indian trade by creating a market for Indian products abroad. Moreland says 'On the export side, the main result of the Dutch and English activities was to secure new and extensive markets for Indian producers indigo, calico, saltpetre, raw silk, and a variety of other items of less individual importance...The development of external relations had thus brought substantial benefit at the moment and a promise of greater benefit to come.'⁷¹ In fact the English ought to have felt grateful to the Mughals for teaching them just those things which they condemned. With the establishment of the English East India Company, English exploitation replaced that of the

69 quoted in W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, 1972, p. 199.

70 *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1974, vol. VII, p. 737.

71 W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, Macmillan, 1972, pp. 299-300.

Mughals. This was perhaps the 'greater benefit to come' of which Moreland speaks! Gradually the English began to harass the Indian traders and craftsmen through their agents (*gomastas*), who, as Warren Hastings said, 'erected themselves into the lords and oppressors of the country instead of confining themselves in honest and fair trade.' Nawāb Mīr Qāsim complained without avail to the English governor in 1762, 'the *gomastas* and other servants in every district, in every *gunge parganā* and village, carry on a trade in oil, fish, straw, bamboos, rice, paddy, betel-nuts and other things; and every man with a Compnay's *dustuck* in his hand regards himself as not less than the Company'.⁷²

In the middle of the seventeenth century both the English and the Dutch obtained from Shāh Jahān exemption from all tolls from Surāt to inland markets and from Huglī to Āgrā and Delhi, as well as reduction of customs duties. This gave them an edge over Indian traders. In 1716 Farrukh-siyar allowed a still further reduction in the customs duty at Surāt and in Bengal. In 1700 the use of Asiatic silks and printed dyes and calicoes was prohibited, though they could be imported for re-exportation. In 1720 the wear and use of calicoes dyed or printed in England was prohibited. Protective duties were levied to the advantage of the English weaving industry. When the *dīwānī* was assumed by the East India Company in 1765 there followed more oppression against Indian craftsmen. The Company's agents forced Indian farmers to sell them their produce at a low price and then insisted on merchants to buy it at an exorbitant rate. A complaint made about this by the then *zamindārs* says 'they (the agents) do not pay the customs due to the Sircar, but are guilty of all manner of sebitious and injurious acts. There is now scarce anything of worth left in the country'.⁷³

There followed a continual oppression of Indian traders by the British and an undisguised warfare on Indian trade. Indian

72 P. Woodroff, *The Men who Ruled India*, vol. 1, p. 100 (Mīr Qāsim's letter of 26 March, 1762).

73 quoted in *History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1977 vol. VIII, p. 776.

vessels were seized and looted and Indian trade crippled by a series of measures which aimed at converting India from a producing country to a mere supplier of raw material for English manufacturers. The blow to Indian industry was as effective as that dealt by the Mughal administrators even though it was muffled by the glove of English diplomacy. These invidious measures may be summarised as follow :

1. Only four year after the assumption of the *dīwānī*, the East India Company passed an arbitrary order prohibiting Indian weavers to work in their own homes and forcing them to work instead in the Company's factories. They monopolised the sale of salt, betel and tobacco, raised the customs taxes, and forbade every European except the English from trading in Bengal. Weavers were forbidden to work for others till they completed the orders placed by the English Company. Besides they were forced to accept whatever price the Company's agents fixed.
2. In 1813 the British parliament in order to protect British manufacturers raised the duties against Indian piece goods exorbitantly— $78\frac{1}{3}$ per cent *ad valorem* on calicoes and $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent on muslins.
3. Indian silk manufactures and piece-goods made of cotton and silk intermixed were altogether excluded from the British market.
4. In 1813 various discriminatory duties were levied on ships other than British visiting English ports. This caused great injury to Indian shipping and ship-building. As a result the industry declined.

Apart from ruining Indian trade by discriminatory measures, the English carried out actual aggression side by side. Unfortunately the weakness and the internal conflicts of the Mughal emperors after Aurangzīb gave them this chance. In 1685 they obtained permission of their king, James II to send out fleets to Bengal and off Surāt to plunder and destroy Indian ships. Indian merchant ships were in discriminately plundered. Job Charnock the chief factor of the English Company amassed a

huge fortune. Sir John Child the Company's governor of Bombay indulged in all kinds of 'oppression in justice and plunder' towards Indians. In 1690 the English established themselves on the bank of the Huglī and soon after they obtained Surāt. By now they were no longer traders. The wolf had thrown away his lamb-skin. The weak Mughal emperor, Farrukh-siyar could hardly hope to stem the English advance. They were able to wrest from him as they themselves wrote home privileges and immunities in most parts of India, not only beyond any other nations trading thither, but even beyond the natives themselves.'

Meanwhile the piracy on Indian ships continued. Indian vessels were formidable, but they were marchant ships equipped for trade, not for war. They lacked manoeuverability. English piracy assumed such a proportion in Bengal that in 1748 Nawāb Ali Vardī Khān had to protest to Barwell the Company's governor: 'The Syads (Arabs) Moghuls, Armenians etc., merchants of Hoogly have complained that *lakhs* of goods have been seized and plundered and I am informed from foreign parts that ships bound to Hooghly you seize under pretence of their belonging to the French.' But the English Company no longer cared for such admonitions. They knew that the grand Mughal empire was fast tumbling down like a pack of cards.

Having crippled Indian's cotton industry, the English proceeded to do the same with silk. The agents of the Company forced weavers to work for them alone, and paid them at extremely low rates (about 15 to 40 per cent lower than the market rates). Worse still the weaving community was subjected to the worst possible coercion. William Bolts (1772) describes this in detail:

'With every species of monopoly, every kind of oppression to manufacturers of all denominations throughout the whole country has daily increased, in so much that weavers for daring to sell their goods, and *dalāls* and *pykārs*, for having Contributed to or connived at such sales, have, by the Company's agents been frequently seized and imprisoned, confined in irons, fined considerable sums of money, flogged, and deprived, in the most ignominious manner, of what they esteem most valuable, their crafts. Weavers also, upon their inability to perform such agreements as have been forced from them by the name of

mutchulcahs to make good the deficiency and the winders of raw silk called *nagads* have been treated also with such injustice, so that instances have been known of their cutting off their thumbs, to prevent their being forced to wind silk. This last kind of workmen were pursued with such vigour during Lord Clive's late government in Bengal, from a zeal from increasing the Company's investment of raw silk, that the most sacred laws of society were atrociously violated, for it was a common thing for the Company's sepoys to be sent by force of arms to break open the houses of the Armenian merchants established at Sayedābad (who have from times immemorial been largely concerned in the silk trade) and forcibly take the "*nagads*" from their work, and carry them away to the English factories'.⁷⁴

The indigo trade, too, was wrecked by the English in the same manner. English planters of indigo established themselves in India, cheated and ill-treated the workers, flogged them as though they were slaves and confined them whenever they pleased. The cup of misery of the Indian trader was full to the brim. The cotton, silk, indigo and other flourishing industries were completely wiped out. India was no more world's market and she was completely at England's mercy in trade. English shipping had wrecked Indian merchant shipping and had lost for it the markets of Africa, Arabia, Persia, the Indian Archipelago and the far East. No more did India's handloom products reach them. The Industrial Revolution in Great Britain destroyed whatever chance the Indian industry had for a revival. Hand-made goods could hardly compete with those that poured out from factories. Indian society, with its gulf between the intellectuals and the working class, was too weak to give new directions to industry. India lost her commercial leadership in the Orient.

The Failure of Economy

The eighteenth century was a period of progressive deterioration in Indian living. Rural economy was shattered, the cost of living rose and general prosperity declined. It was an era of disorder,

74 William Bolts, *Consideration on Indian Affairs*, 1772, pp. 194-7.

unrest and exploitation. Armies marched through the countryside. There was incessant fighting. Marāthā soldiers exacted *chāuth*. The Mugals tribute. The English *gomāstas* went about forcing artisans and workers to sweat for little or no pay. It was robbery under different names. The robbers were many, the victim one. In 1729 a rupee bought almost four maunds of wheat. In 1776 hardly a maund. Gold disappeared from coinage and only silver, copper and the humble *cowrie* remained; and even that which remained was debased and untrustworthy. Men, women and children were treated worse than chattels and sold for small sums in the market. Babies were snatched from the arms of mothers and flung into slavery. Even God was forgotten. Vaishṇavas corrupted girls and daughters-in-law in many households.⁷⁵ Chaṇḍī and Manasā were depicted as helping their worshippers to seduce women.⁷⁶ In his work *Shivāyana*, Rāmeshvara (1677-1744) describes how Shiva went out for alms to a village and the Koch women living there came out on hearing the sound of his conch, only to be seduced by the god.⁷⁷ Islām redoubled its efforts at conversion by the sword. In the middle of the century we are told 'after the crushing defeat of Hindu arms near Delhi by Ahmad Shāh Ābdalī about ninety thousand persons, male and female, were taken prisoners and obtained eternal happiness by embracing the Muslim faith'.⁷⁸ The 'eternal happiness' was obviously the will to live which everyone has, irrespective of his religion.

The food of the middle class was plain rice 'with which if they have nothing else to add, they take salt and are satisfied'.⁷⁹ Only those better off could afford milk or *ghee*. Others ate *jawār* or *bajrā*, *kitchery* (pulse and rice boiled together), or even grass roots. The artisans were ruined by the English Company's monopolising purchases from them at ridiculously low prices.

75 Ram Prasad Sen, *Vidyusundar*.

76 *History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1977, vol. 8, p. 722-3.

77 *Ibid.*, p. 723.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 732, quoting Murray T. Titus, *Islām in India and Pakistan*, 1959, pp 32-3.

79 *Travels of Sebastian Manrique*, Haklayt Society, vol. I, pp. 64-5.

It was plain and simple exploitation. Not only that the weavers were fined, flogged and imprisoned. No wonder they quit their trade and ran away for dear life. The marvellously skilful weavers of Dāccā were done for. 'It was a misfortune for them to appear too dexterous,' Abbe Raynal says 'because they were then forced to work only for the government which paid them ill, and kept them in a sort of captivity.'⁸⁰

Starting with large borrowings from the affluent Indian merchants of note like the Jagat Seths Umi Chand etc., the English Company gradually monopolised all trade themselves and then threw them out. It was like kicking off the ladder after reaching the roof. The mantle was snatched from these merchant kings of India. They abandoned trading. All their money had perforce to go into land. The Company emerged as the sole trading body in almost everything—salt, betel-nut, tobacco, cloth and whatever else there was for merchandise.

Meanwhile the system of farming out revenues was creating oppression for the poor cultivators, who were already wearied out by constant depredations by marauders and troops. The *tāluqdārs*, *chaudharīs* or *jāgīrdārs* to whom the revenues were farmed out, paid the sum stipulated and pocketed the rest. It was natural for them to squeeze out of the peasants as much as they could, and turn their uncertain tenures to their best advantage. Lord Cornwallis created a fresh class of *zamindārs*. The cultivator were, at the same time deprived of many of their rights in the land, as for example that of the Bengal farmer to enjoy his land on a permanent basis unless he failed to pay an year's rent. The landowners became weak and poor the intermediaries powerful and rich. The village was no longer for the farmers, but for those to whom the revenues were farmed.

One deplorable result of the impoverishment of the tenantry was the steep rise in slavery. Those peasants who could not pay their revenue were sold as slaves. The Portugese sold them in the markets at Huglī. The Maghs carried off 1,800 men women and children from south Bengal and sold them in the Arakan for prices between twenty and seventy rupees. In fact

80 Abbe Raynal, *History of the Settlements and Trade of Europeans in the East*, vol. II, p. 149.

among the items for export the Dutch and the English traders of Surāt, Madras and Masulipatam, included slaves too. In 1785 Sir William Jones testified before the Grand Jury at Calcutta as follows:

‘Hardly a man or a woman exists in a corner of this populous town who hath not at least one slave child either purchased at a trifling price or saved perhaps from a death that might have been fortunate for a life that seldom fails of being miserable. Many of you, I presume, have seen large boats filled with children, coming down the river for open sale at Calcutta. Now can you be ignorant that most of them were stolen from their parents, or bought perhaps for a measure of rice in a time of scarcity?’⁸¹

Although traffic in slaves was abolished in 1789, it continued in the villages. Serfs worked on farms and could be found in the houses of nobles and landlords. In truth it became more organised than ever before. Prices were fixed for slaves. A boy could be got for 12 to 20 rupees an adult for 15 to 20. A girl who was from eight to ten years old fetched from 5 to 15 rupees. For each additional year in age the slave fetched a rupee more up to the age of twenty. Rural serfdom continued until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Wages and Standard of Living

Price structure completely changed in the eighteenth century. The copper mines of Rājputānā and Central India were completely exhausted, and the metal had to be imported from Japan through Dutch traders. This led to the appreciation of the copper *dām* and a fall in the value of agricultural produce. The farmer had to give more of what he produced to the state in payment of land revenue. He had to give more to his creditors too. On the other hand the wants and liabilities of the *jāgīrdār* and nobles to whom the revenues were farmed remained the same. Their exploitation was as bad as before. They thrived, but the farmers suffered. Officially a *dām* was still

81 Quoted in *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1977, vol VIII, p. 743.

considered to be a fortieth of a rupee. In actual fact it was 1/48. This debasement of currency led to a steep rise in prices. Taking the base year as 1,600 the fall in real wages was as follows:

1600	100.00
1650	184.51
1729	62.04
1807	69.82

The British Company on whom the mantle of the Mughal empire fell also created circumstances unfavourable to the common people. Instead of taking steps to deal with the situation created by the lack of copper for coinage in a rational manner, they took the easiest way out and further debased the coinage by reducing the amount of gold in their gold rupees. Thus creditors received for each, gold rupee only six rupees of silver instead of the ten and a half which it was worth. In 1781 the East India Company issued copper coins for the first time but the experiment was not successful as due to the over-valuation of the copper the copper pice came back to the treasury.

The buying power of Indian money remained only three-fifths of what it was in Akbar's time. The standard of living deteriorated. People who before used *ghee*, oil and sugar freely in their diet now used them sparingly. Salt was much more expensive.

Between the years 1595 and 1801 there were twenty-nine famines of which two (those of 1595-98 and 1661) were widespread throughout India. English writers like Moreland have criticised the Mughals for not doing anything about famines in their times beyond opening kitchens etc.⁸² The English Company, however, was no better. In the famine of 1770-1 the chief agents of the East India Company the Council of Calcutta 'kept locked up in their magazine a part of the harvest, and carried on the most odious and the most criminal of all monopolies.' In order to gain some money they allowed several million people to die of hunger.

82 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1977 vol. VIII, p. 746.

Life and Society

SOCIAL DIVISIONS

1000 to 1300

In the period of transition which marked the end of Hindu rule and the beginning of Turkish domination (1000 to 1300), we find the same caste divisions as mentioned by the *Smritis*, but there is a slight change in their respective positions. The Brahmins, retained their superiority, but were not above the law. *Gautama-dharma shāstra* had spoken of them as beyond the King's authority. But the view which emerges now is that a Brahmin was not exempt from punishment. The king could excuse a Brahmin from a crime committed by him only if he was very learned and had not erred deliberately. If one happened to be attacked by a Brahmin desperado he could kill the assailant only if escape was impossible and ordinary weapons like a stick and so forth had not been able to ward off the attack. A distinction was made between learned and cultured Brahmins and those who were vulgar and of a low morality. The latter were to be shunned and could not claim the privileges allowed normally to the Brahmin class.

We find frequent references to learned Brahmins in the literature of the period. Some of the Brahmins followed the occupations which were normally for Kshatriyas. This shows

that while the respective castes kept their usual avocations, the compartments were not watertight. Although the lower castes were forbidden to take up the functions of the higher ones, we find Shūdras as rulers and warriors also.

The Rājputs emerged as ruling families in northern India, such as the Guhilaputras or Guhilots, the Pratihāras or Gurjaras and the Chāhamānas. Other families like the Rāshtrākūṭas, Chandellas, Paramāras, Gāhaḍavālas and Kachchhrapaghātas appeared a little later on. In the South the Chālukyas had already established their hold.

The Kāyasthas had become prominent in the latter half of the ninth century. In the eleventh century and later, they occupied the highest public offices.

The attitude to Shūdras remained as uncharitable as before. Indeed it became even worse. While in earlier times a Brahmin householder could accept without restriction food from his slave, his cowherd, a family friend and his tenant or cultivator, it was now laid down that this could be right only in times of distress. Later on it was altogether prohibited. A Shūdra was not to be touched. If by accident one did touch him he had to purify himself by bathing with clothes on and, as a penance, fast. A Shūdra could not cook food in a Brahmin household.

The Chaṇḍālas formed, as before, the lowest and most despised class. They were known as *antyās* or *antajāstis*, and included washermen, leather-workers and fishermen, as well as aboriginal tribes comprising Veṇus, Burūlas, Medas and Bhillas. While the touch of a Shūdra was considered to be defiling, with a Chaṇḍāla the prohibition was much worse. Even their sight and proximity defiled. If a Chaṇḍāla's shadow fell on someone, purification was necessary.

The Vindhya hills were the abode of aboriginal tribes—Bhils, Pulindas and Shavaras. We find them mentioned in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*. They were clad in tiger-skins peacocks' feathers and elephants' teeth. Their women wore necklaces of strings of the *guñjā* fruit. They lived on the flesh of deer and drank liquor, and they would plunder caravans passing through the forests. They had their chiefs who wielded a lot of influence over them. Worshipping their goddess, they would appease her by offering human victims.

The mixed castes continued as before. They were classified as (1) those born of the union of a higher caste man with a woman of a caste lower (*anuloma*) and (2) born of a low caste man and high caste woman (*pratiloma*). The latter were considered impure. The *Vaijayanti*, a work of this period gives a list of sixty-four mixed castes, the *Brihaddharma Purāṇa*, thirty-six. The status given to these thirty-six mixed castes is that of Shūdras.

There was little change in this era in social structure. The Brahmins lost a little of their exalted position. Other castes remained more or less the same. The Rājputs emerge as the warrior class and the Kāyasthas as the class which manned the highest offices in the state.

In the Sultanate

With the advent of Muslims the introduction of a new element in society and etiquette was inevitable. At the same time Hindu society with its traditional divisions continued, and Muslim manners had little impact. The rulers of the Sultānate were too busy in wars to bother about changes in social matters. Muslim nobility remained confined to the main cities. The villages of the countryside did not attract them.

The *Smritīs* had apportioned the greatest industry to Brahmins. 'From sunrise to sunset' a text says, 'the Brahmin should not remain idle for an instant, and he should devote himself to his compulsory, occasional and optional duties, as well as other blameless occupations'.¹ Hitherto priestly duties were performed by Brahmins, but sometimes these were not enough for yielding sufficient money. So farming was allowed.² The Brahmins entered other professions also and employed themselves in trade and crafts. Doubtless the large scale destruction of temples by the Muslim invaders must have ruined priesthood. The domain of the Kshatriya caste was ruling and

¹ Daksha quoted in *Grihastharatnākara*, 134.

² *Parāshara-Mādhava*, I, 425-6.

fighting. 'Punishing the wicked' and 'cherishing the good' are mentioned as their duties.³

The Shūdra's duty was to serve the higher castes—the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors) and Vaishyas (merchants). But service of Brahmins only was believed to bring him real happiness and merit.⁴ While previously a Shūdra was prohibited to sell certain kinds of goods, relaxations were now allowed. He could sell meat, salt and so forth, if he needed to for a living.⁵ In other respects, however, his disabilities continued. He could not study the *Vedas* or the *Purāṇas* nor expound them. But he might listen to recitations of the holy texts. He could chant only certain kind of *mantras* (containing just the word 'namaskāra'), and could offer oblations only in the ordinary fire, not the consecrated one.⁶ About social disabilities there is considerable contradiction in the texts. The general view existing is that accepting food from a Shūdra is not quite right and ought to be avoided as much as possible. Here again restrictions are somewhat watered down inasmuch as it is provided that food may be accepted from the hands of a good Shūdra.⁷ If a person of a higher caste is unable to procure food for himself, or after a long journey, is tired out, he may take food from a Shūdra, but only the bare minimum he needs. On the other hand some authorities are harsher in their approach. According to one, even staying with a Shūdra, sitting in the same cart him and listening to a religious discourse by a low caste man are prohibited.⁸ The touch of a Shūdra has to be purified by bathing with clothes on.⁹ A Shūdra could be kept in slavery by one of the upper castes.¹⁰ Although caste discrimination finds mention in the *Smriti* digests and commentaries of this period, in actual practice these remained more or less forgotten, because Hindus

3 *Ibid.*, I, 390-7.

4 *Ibid.*, I, 418-420. Also *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* III, 4-5, 24-5, 31-2.

5 *Grihashtaratnākara*, 479-80.

6 *Madanapārijāta*, 231.

7 *Grihashtaratnākara*, 334.

8 *Parāshara-Mādhava*, III, 379-80.

9 *Madanapārijāta*, 133.

10 *Vivādachintāmaṇi* 68.

as a whole had to face the menace of forced conversions. Caste distinctions also governed the penances prescribed for various crimes and wrong doing. For small offences the higher the caste the more strict was the penance, while for the more serious ones it was the other way about.

Mention is also made of mixed castes. The belief was that the issue of an *anuloma* union (low caste girl and high caste man) had a position caste-wise somewhere in between those of the parents.¹¹ The status of the *Chañḍālas* remained as bad as ever. They were kept at a distance and even coming near them was considered to be a fault to be expiated by penance. A Brahmin had to be particularly careful. If he talked to an out-caste, touched him, drew water from his well, or came into contact with him in any way, he had to undergo some kind of penance. Association of other despised castes like washermen and the like was also forbidden, though in their case the penance was not so severe.

The decline in knowledge of the *Vedas* is reflected in the direction that one who cannot perform *Vedic* rites may carry out the ordinary one mentioned in the *Smṛitīs*. If even this is not possible, good deeds are enough.

The laws of Indian hospitality were not forgotten. In the ancient period of Hindu rule a guest was given great importance. So was it in this period. But the concept of a guest was somewhat peculiar. It meant a stranger who, being oppressed with hunger, suddenly arrived at some one's house in the hope of getting food. If the guest was a Brahmin he would be offered a seat and shown all due reverence. Others were just given food, the other courtesies being ignored.

The pattern of caste structure in regional kingdoms—as for example Vijayanagara—was somewhat different. Merchants (*Cheṭṭīs*) weavers, artisans, barbers and so forth were next only to Brahmins. Jugglers, Soothsayers, mendicants and others formed the lowest strata. Brahmins were highly respected. Ministers, high officials and feudatories towered over the common people.

The impact of Islām must have given a rude shock to Hindu

11 *Parāshara-Madhava*, I, 512-3.

caste ridden society. It certainly narrowed down the differences between one caste and another. Such distinctions would be senseless when the Muslim conquerors were there offering the choice of Islām or death. Much of this shake-up is reflected in the wavering attitudes of Hindu authorities of this period towards the caste structure.

Another impact of Muslim rule was the growth of slavery. Muslim conquerors were always eager to carry away Hindu girls as slaves. It was the natural consequence of each victory won by them. They made no distinction between a common girl or one of a high family. Even princesses were carried off to swell Muslim harems. Sultāns made presents of slaves to their kinsmen or to foreign potentates. Muhammad bin Tughluq sent the Chinese emperor 'one hundred men as slaves, and one hundred slave songstresses dancers from among the Indian infidels'.

Slaves find mention in the *Samriti* authorities of this period. Four kinds are distinguished—those born in the household, and those purchased acquired, or inherited. Then there were those who had sold themselves of their own accord into slavery. A slave could get back his freedom by winning his master's favour, or if he saved his master from some imminent danger. If the master cohabited with a woman slave and she had a child by him, both the child and the slave got their freedom. There were slaves in the Hindu empire of Vijayanagara, as also courtesans who plied their trade. Hindu temples had dancing girls.

As regards Muslim society, the sources of information are meagre. Persians Afghāns, Turks and Arabs formed the upper echelons. Of these the Turks were predominant, and they zealously stuck to their culture, even though inter-marriages affected their exclusiveness and the purity of their race. Most of these nobles kept themselves aloof from their Indian subjects and formed a class of their own. Professor Habibullah has classified Muslim society under three main heads namely *ahl-i-saif*, men of the sword, *ahl-i-qalam*, men of the pen, and *awām-o-khalq*,

the common people.¹² A fourfold distinction in Muslim society finds place in Muhammad ibn Asad Jalāl-ud-dīn al-Dawwānī's work *Akhlāq-i-Jalālī*. In this classes are divided into 1. Men of the pen like lawyers, judges and learned men 2. Men of the sword which obviously includes fighting men, generals, soldiers and the like 3. Men of business, merchants, artisans and craftsmen, and 4. Husbandmen, such as seedsmen bailiffs cultivators and so forth. In the *Āin-i-Akbarī*, Abu-'l-Fazl also mentions four divisions. These are 1. Warriors who he says have the nature of fire 2. Artificers and merchants who hold the place of air 3. Men of learning who in their wisdom are like a river rising in the drought of the world, and 4. Husbandmen and labourers who may be compared to the earth because 'by their exertions the staple of life is brought to perfection.' The men of the sword were the top class of Muslim nobility who fought on fields of war and had princely pastimes like polo, hunting, chess and backgammon. They amassed large fortunes and were never short of money, lived in palatial houses with a large number of slaves and domestic servants. Their living was patterned on that of royalty and their mansions were palaces in miniature. The 'men of the pen' would be the officers, ecclesiastics, the smaller landholders and men learning. Their source of income was generally their landed property, though many of them were big farmers. Quite a number of them were engaged in calligraphy and epistolography which incidentally were also a source of substantial income.

The *awām* were the general populace, having numbers but no voice. They formed the numerous peasants, cultivators, workmen, artisans, domestic servants, shopkeepers and petty traders. Merchants would be included in this class, though the more prosperous ones would perhaps be in between higher and lower classes, and the topmost ones could count themselves with the nobility. The rich Hindu bankers and traders enjoyed a high status. Barnī complained that they 'outdid Muslims in pomp and material comforts.'¹³ Low class converts to Islām were

12 A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in Indian*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1961, pp. 245 and 248.

13 *Fatawai-Jahandari*, 120 (a).

included among the commoners. The workers and artisans lived in separate quarters of the cities which bore their names e.g. the weavers' quarters, the potters' locality and so forth. In normal times this class lived a fairly easy life because their living standard was ordinary and prices of essential commodities were not high. Nevertheless there was a lot of difference between them and the higher classes. They could not afford luxuries and their lives were drab and uneventful. All that they could manage was to feed and clothe themselves. In the innumerable droughts, famines, wars and plundering expeditions, they were the worst sufferers, for then starvation was their lot.

Although there were no caste divisions of superiority and inferiority among Muslims, there were religious sects who did not see eye to eye with one another. Prominent among them were the Sunnīs, the orthodox Muslims, and the Shiās, the unorthodox ones. The differences between the two are expressed in the following observances:¹⁴

'For the orthodox (Sunnī) Muslim these authoritative sources of belief and practices (the Prophet's Sunna as embodied in the Hadīth) were not the spiritual monopoly of a divinely appointed priesthood. Anyone in the community could devote himself to the study and development of the religious sciences which came to be based upon the study of the Qurān and the Sunna of the Prophet as embodied in the canonical collections of Hadīth. The Caliph or head of the Muslim community had no spiritual powers; each believer was equal in his right to study how God must be obeyed (although he was bound by the consensus of the community before him)'.

The specific Shiāh doctrines were as follows: 'First, the martyr's death of Husain (he and his band of 200 followers were slain at Karbalā) led to the introduction of a passion motive; the tragedy of the death of Husain paves the way for paradise for the Shiāh. Second, the Shiāh developed the doctrine of the Imām, on infallible being partaking of the divine attributes sent by God to guide the faithful in every age. Some Shiāhs regard the Imām as an incarnation of the God-head itself, but they are not typical. The Imām is sinless (unlike

¹⁴ *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1958, pp. 374-5.

Muhammad) and infallible, possessing a secret knowledge—the Divine Light—handed down from God to Muhammad and thence to 'Alī and his descendants. He is the final interpreter of the word of God in the *Qurān*. He is appointed by, and responsible to, God, and not by, and to, the community of the faithful. His powers are much nearer those of a pope than are those of the Sunnī Caliphs'.

The Shiāhs themselves split into many sects namely the believers in twelve Imāms, the Ismā'ilīs and the Qarmations. The Ismā'ilīs believed in 'seven emanations of the world intellect—God, the universal mind, the universal soul, primeval matter, space, time, and the world of earth and men'.¹⁵ The poorer classes, the artisans and the peasants, were particularly attracted by the beliefs of the Ismā'ilīs and Qarmations. Muslim orthodoxy, represented by certain chroniclers like Badāūnī, was often pitched against unorthodox sects also. Badāūnī for example, called Shiāhs 'heretics, fools, worshippers of the devil, fit only to be cast out'.¹⁶

Another class of Muslims were the Sūfīs. Their religious beliefs will be stated more fully in the chapter on Religion. They were mystics who emphasised the devotional aspect in religion just as the leaders of the *bhaktī* movement had done for Hinduism. There was a spurt of Sūfism in the Khaljī period (1290-1320). A number of renowned saints lived and taught in these times—Hazrat Nizam-ud-dīn Auliya of Delhi, Shaikh Farīd-ud-dīn Mas'ūd Ganj-i-Shakar of Ajodhan and 'Alā-ud-dīn Sābir of Piran Kalyar. These saints were sometimes held in disfavour by Muslim rulers and those of the orthodox school. But the common people found solace in their teachings. There were also Muslim ascetics known as *pīrs* and *qalandars* who were held in high esteem and surrounded by admirers and devotees. The Sūfī creed found renowned teachers and disciples in the period of the Tugluq Sultāns also, particularly Shaikh Nasir-ud-dīn, known popularly as Raushan Charāg (the Bright Lamp).

15 *Ibid.*, p. 375-6.

16 S.R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Oxford, 1940, p. 56.

Social Division in Mughal Times

The divisions already created from before continued to exist in the Mughal rule. Hindus had the caste system and differences between one caste and another persisted in their rigidity. Some travellers in Akbar's reign were so taken up with these differences that they considered the Vaishya merchants of Gujarāt as a separate 'nation' distinct from Brahmins and Rājputs. The Sikhs were considered by foreign visitors as just another Hindu sect. The Pārsis were emerging as traders. In the beginning they were agriculturalists, and in 1616 Terry says 'their profession is, for the generality, all kinds of husbandry'. By Thévenot's time they had become conspicuous in Surāt as successful merchants. It is often mentioned by Muslim historians that many Hindus of the lower classes became converted to Islām due to Brahminical tyranny. The real reason, however, is obviously the pressure of fanatic Muslim nobles and rulers who considered it their duty to forcibly convert non-Muslims to Islām. Although many Hindus preferred death to conversion, it was obviously a hard choice to make. Quite a number stuck on to dear life. Another misconception seems to be that Hindus became so aggressive that in Shāh Jahān's reign they began to convert Muslims forcibly to Hinduism. A Muslim writer says 'Hinduism by now was very much on the offensive and was absorbing a number of Muslims'.¹⁷ Another Muslim writer says 'In his (Shāh Jahān's) reign, some contemporary Muslim writers declare, the arrogance and boldness of the Hindus increased and in several places mosques were converted into temples and Muslims were converted to Hinduism...Prohibition of conversion to Hinduism and Christianity was justified as a defensive measure; inquiries made in Bhambar, an adjoining area, revealed that 4,000 Muslim women had been converted

17 S.M. Ikram, *Muslim Civilisation In India*, ed. Ainslie T. Embree, Columbia University Press, 1964, p. 232.

to Hīnduism'.¹⁸ These observations are not supported by any conclusive facts. The Hindu powers during the Mughal period viz. the Marāthās and Rājputs, though valiant in war were not so dishonourable as to force the Hīndu religion on those whom they conquered. Shivājī, we have already observed, would treat the *Qurān* with respect and did not perpetrate any indignities on his captives. It would be very inconsistent with the Rājput tradition for them to do such a thing. These texts mention 'converts' but not 'forcible conversions'. Hīnduism has never been a missionary religion in the sense of securing adherents. In the *Gītā* Lord Krishna, after having expounded the sacred doctrine to his disciple Arjuna, ends up by saying 'now think over it and do as you please'. It is fantastic to imagine that Hindus, whose religion is so eclectic, should aspire for forced converts. It is quite another thing if people are attracted of themselves to such a religion.

The Muslim community also remained almost the same, except that the process of Indianisation went on at a fast pace. Akbar's reforms did a lot in this direction. The Muslim sects increased till they reached as many as seventy-three. Sir Thomas Roe wrote, 'Among the Mughals there are many strict Muslims, many that follow Ali, his son-in-law, and other new risen prophets, which have their Xeriffs, mullas and priests, their mosques religious votaries, washings, prayings and ceremonies infinite; and for penitentiaries, no heresy in the world can show so strange examples, nor brag of such voluntary poverties, punishments, sufferings and chastisements as these; all which are esteemed holy men, but of mingled religion, not upright with their great Prophet'. The Ismā'ilīs split up into two sects the Khojās and Bohrās, The former adored their spiritual guide, kissing his toes and heaping gold and silver on his feet while he sat behind a screen. A class of Hindus called themselves Mussulmān Sūfīs. Among them the most prominent, known as Madariyās lived like *sannyāsīs* (ascetics) rubbing ash on their bodies, smoking hemp, carrying black flags, wearing black

18 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, 1974, ed. R.C. Majumdar, vol. VII, pp. 212-3. (The view has, however, been contradicted by the editor).

turbans and putting on fetters round their neck. There is a story behind their name. Once when the Prophet reached heaven he found its gate narrow as a needle's eye. The angel Gabriel asked him to seek Madār's help by uttering the words 'dam Madār'. This done, the gate became wide, and Prophet entered heaven. It would be tiresome to mention all the sects. Many of them had queer practices, like the Jalāliyan (followers of Sayyid Jalāl-ud-dīn Bukhārī) who would swallow snakes and go about nude, the Be-qaid who indulged in abuses, the Kakāns of Kāshmir who could hypnotise people and the Piyarā Panthiāns who just stood mutely before houses with their begging bowls.

In other ways, too, orthodox Islām was flouted by those who professed to conform to it. Most of the Mugal kings drank, the notable exception being Aurangzib, who also tried to suppress the practice, though without success. In despair he exclaimed 'in all Hindustān there can't be found more than two men who don't drink' (meaning himself and Abdul Wahāb his chief *qāzī*). But he was wrong about his *qāzī*, for as Manucci, commenting on his utterance said, 'With respect to Abdul Wahāb, he was in error, for I myself send him a bottle of spirits, which he drank in secret, so that the king could not find out'.¹⁹ *Pīrs* claimed themselves to be divine incarnations. Devout people worshipped tombs of saints, which by the way, as Manucci points out, 'afforded great opportunities for all sorts of moral mischief'.²⁰ Idolatrous adoration was shown to the Prophet's footprints. The court too was transformed from a haven of culture where once sat Akbar's 'nine gems' of greatness, to a cheap place for senseless flatterers. Bernier says²¹ 'I must not conceal from you the base and disgusting adulation invariably witnessed there. Whenever a word escapes the lips of the king, if at all to the purpose how trifling soever may be its import, it is immediately caught up by the surrounding throng; and the chief Omrahs, extending their arms towards heaven, as if to receive some benediction exclaim *karāmāt*,

19 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 2, pp. 5-6 (Trans. William Irvine).

20 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 205.

21 Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, ed. Constable, p. 263.

karāmāt ! Wonderful, wonderful, he has spoken wonders!' Abundance of wealth captured as spoils of war or as loot, corrupted morals, and prostitutes, dancing girls and concubines figured largely in Muslim life. Manucci says for all Mahomedans are very fond of women, who are their principal relaxation and almost their only pleasure'.²² Careri too noticed the wantonness of Muslim living: 'They spend all they have in luxury keeping a vast number of servants, but above all of concubines. These being many every one of them strives to be beloved above the rest, using all manner of allurements, perfumes and sweet ointments. Sometimes to heighten their master's lusts they give him compositions of pearls, gold, opium and amber; or else much wine that he may require company in bad. Then some drive away the flies, others rub his hands and feet, others dance, others play on music and others do other things'.²³ Gambling, cheating and even homosexual congress were other vices which gradually crept in. Manucci mentions 'wretched pretenders to holiness who satisfy their lust and avarice'.²⁴

Despite all these adverse influences, Muslims remained staunch in their faith. The Christian missionaries despaired of converting them even though they tried very hard. Bernier remarked sorrowfully 'you will be disappointed if you suppose that in ten years one Mohammadan will be converted to christianity'.²⁵ The daily prayers and the annual fast of Ramazan, the giving of charity) (*zakāt*) holy pilgrimage (*hajj*), reading of the holy *Qurān*, formed the practice of all Muslims.

The end of the Mughal period witnessed the degeneration of the nobility and a deterioration in the economic condition of the common people. The condition of the workers, artisans and cultivators was miserable. Brahmins deserted cities, where the spread of Muslim culture had made their presence no longer necessary. They retired to the villages to pursue their profession of priesthood. The Kāyasthas, however, found the atmosphere favourable. They were able to learn Persian and filled

22 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 2, p. 342.

23 Careri, *A Voyage Round the World*, part III, p. 251.

24 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, vol. 2, p. 13-4; vol. 3, pp. 267-8.

25 Bernier, *Travels in Mogul Empire*, ed. Constable, p. 290.

all the offices requiring clerical work and an acquaintance with accounts. The period marked the rise of Hindu traders in the coastal regions of Bengal, Gujarāt and the Coromandel. The peasants lived poorly. The (*Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh* (1695) mentions that the people of Bengal cooked brinjals, herbs and lemons together, kept it in cold water and ate it the next day. Manrique (1629-43) says of the peasants, 'Their daily meal consists of rice with which, if they have nothing else to add, they take salt and are satisfied.'

Caste considerations among Hindus persisted in social living. Occupations were generally hereditary, but exceptions were mounting. Buchanan observes: 'All proper Hindus regret that in these days no caste adheres to its proper duties, but many persons, in order to procure a subsistence betake themselves to professions for which they were not intended.'²⁶

2. LIFE, MANNERS AND PASTIMES

1000-1300—A high standard of living prevailed in the period between the end of the Hindu rule and the beginning of the Turkish conquest. Agriculture, industry trade were greatly developed and men led comfortable lives. Indian cities were prosperous. The temples were glorious and had immense wealth. A rich merchant's house, and described by the cotemporary literature of the period had steps of crystal, crystal floors, and huge stores of gold, silver and jewels. Courtesans were rich and lived mansions almost like palaces. One of these had seven enclosures.²⁸ Kings and their quests ate off gold and silver platters. Palaces were magnificent with white paved floors, gold pillars and coloured walls. They were often nine stories high, with ivory fencing, floors and walls of crystal and mirror-like slabs. Kings had a number of residences and changed them according to the seasons. When they moved in procession they were adorned with pearl necklaces, gold anklets and perfumed with camphor, musk and other drugs.

26 Martin, *Eastern India*, vol. 1, p. 152 and pp. 198-206.

27 *Moharāja-parājaya* a play written by poet Yashahpāla.

28 Madanamālā's mansion at Pratishthāna mentioned in *Kathāsaritsāgara*.

Kings had a number of female attendants. Chou Ku-Fei mentions that the Chola king employed 'a myriad dancing girls for his table and escort.' The king of Malabar had a bodyguard of 500 selected foreign women. A number of women were dedicated to the service of the temples. The Somanātha temple which was later destroyed by Mahmūd had 350 of them.

A custom peculiar to south India was that of duels. Marco Polo says about the people of Kayal in the Pāṇḍya kingdom that when one man insults another by spitting upon him a mouthful of betel-leaves, permission of the king to have a duel is obtained. The two fight in public with sword and shield till one of them is killed.

The Muslim scholar Al Bīrūnī found the Indians of the period 'haughty, vain self-conceited and stolid,' and insular to a fault. But Marco Polo says of the people of Ma 'bar that they were strict in punishing criminals, and those living in Kannaḍa were 'the best and the most truthful merchants in the world and lived a life of chastity and temperance.' The high sense of justice can be seen by the peculiar custom mentioned by Idrīsī according to which when a creditor draws a circle on the ground enclosing the place where his debtor stands the latter cannot leave it without paying up the amount.

Games and amusements remained the same as before. Children played with balls, girls having toys like dolls and so forth. Married women enjoyed swinging. Dance, drama and music were other amusements. Gambling was very popular and wrestling matches drew large crowds. Water-sports, hunting, polo, elephant fights, duels, wrestling bouts, hawking, angling dance and music were among the favourite pastimes of royalty.

Dress was simple, often just a *dhotī* or *sārī*, or even a mere loin-cloth. Nonetheless women had a variety of fashions, as the sculptured figures of the period show. A women's toilette was a distinctive affair on which great care was bestowed. Coiffures were of many types. Bathing was compulsory for all castes at least once a day. A householder was expected to bathe twice in the day, an ascetic thrice.

Jewellery was a craze. A foreign writer Chau-Ju-Kua mentions that the people of Gujarāt wear double ear-rings, with close-fitting clothes, hoods on their heads and red-leather shoes

on their feet. The kings of south India were particularly fond of jewellery. The same writer tells us that the king of Malabar wore golden hat ornamented with pearls and gems as well as golden armlets and anklets, when he rode on an elephant in procession. 'What this king wears between gold and gems and pearls' we are told by Marco Polo, 'is worth more than a city's ransom.'

Among articles of food we find the use of both of vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes. Fish and meat was allowed. Vegetarian food included rice, pulse and so forth. Wheat is mentioned as food of barbarians' (*mlechchha-bhoja*), and so it seems it was not generally in use. A number of milk preparations are mentioned. Rice, powdered barley, *ghee*, meat-curry and milk was the usual diet of prosperous merchants. A variety of meats formed the royal menu, like that of the sheep, goat, fish, birds, tortoise, crabs and even field rats!

Drinking was quite common. Rich merchants drank wine. There was a lot of drinking on festive occasions and at parties. Kings drank with their ministers and in the company of their mistresses. On occasions such as marriages kings entertained their wives with wines and spirits.²⁹ But generally women of the upper classes did not drink.

There was a widespread belief in omens and portents, charms, spells and witchcraft. Kings went on wars after ensuring that the moment was auspicious and the omens good. Marco Polo noticed the prevalence of astrology, mind-reading and superstition among the people of Ma 'bar. There were experts there, he says, who could find out a man's character and quality by his looks. The merchants of Gujarāt, he observed, 'made their purchases when their shadow was of the required length, and undertook their journeys when the direction of the swallows' flight was favourable.' Veneration for cows continued in this period, and is testified both by Idrīsī and Marco Polo. Sea-voyages met with social disapproval. Social intercourse with a man of the three upper classes who had undertaken a sea-voyage was forbidden.

In the Sultanate Period

There was not much change in Hindu society. Kāyasthas continued to hold prominent clerical and accounts posts. The custom of religious suicide prevailed, and foreign visitors make a mention of it. Hindu devotees would cut off their limbs with sharp knives or their necks with sharp swords to achieve religious merit. Suicide by burning oneself in a fire, or falling off a precipice was often resorted to. Ibn Batūtah mentions the custom of 'drowning voluntarily in the Gaṅgā river' as an act of spiritual merit.

Pilgrimages to sacred places were popular. Some were undertaken as an act of penance. Ibn Batūtah particularly mentions pilgrimage to the sacred river Gaṅgā. The cow continued to be held in high esteem, and the killing of one in honour of a guest was specifically forbidden.³⁰ 'Abdur-Razzāq and the Christian friars, Odoric and Jordanus mention the worship of cows and bulls. Killing of animals was considered sinful. A list of penances is given in the books of the times for killing various kinds of animal and birds.³¹

Muslim society was gradually becoming Indianised during the Sultānate. The Sultān himself was the head of the elite and set the standards and patterns of behaviour. He maintained a huge seraglio, marrying as many women as he pleased. In his off time he had a number of amusements like taming and flying pigeons and falcons, fowling, hunting, watching beautiful girls dance, or listening to music and song. The nobles and *amīrs* followed more or less the same pattern of living. They played chess, gambled, drank and enjoyed themselves with their numerous wives and mistresses. Outdoor sports like polo, swordsmanship and military exercises kept them fit. They were not profligates, however, and were patrons of art and literature. Ibn Batūtah describes them as 'learned, humble, polite and courteous'.³² The '*ulamās*, *mashāikhs* and Sūfī saints were

30 *Grihastharatnākara*, 294.

31 *Parāshara-Mādhava*, III, 61-72.

32 *The Rehala of Ibn Batūtah* (trans. Dr Mehdi Husain), p. 13.

greatly respected and most of them lived pious lives. Hindu *yogīs* and ascetics lived solitary lives of renunciation.

There was great disparity between the rich classes and the commoners who led miserable lives. At the level of the working man there hardly remained any difference between the Muslim ruling class and the Hindus. They were comrades in poverty and were alike ignored by the prosperous nobles, *zamindārs* and merchants. These comprised brewers, goldsmiths, ironsmiths, workers in tin, carpenters, tailors, oilmen, men who sold small articles like betels, flowers and so forth, peasants, shepherds, musicians and the like.

Nothing depicts the process of Indianisation so much as dress. Despite its variety a common type of Indian dress had emerged by the fifteenth century. Muslims adopted the Hindu turban. The Muslim aristocracy borrowed from the Hindus their tight-fitting drawers and loose coat. Rings, necklaces, ear-rings and other ornaments, began to be worn by Muslims despite Islāmic prohibition regarding their use. The tight-fitting cloak worn by Muslim men, and tight women's trousers (often worn beneath the *lahangā* or skirt) were adopted by Rājputs.

The elite wore brocade tunics, long drawers and a head-dress called the *kulāh*. Tartaric gowns, which for winter were stuffed with cotton were worn by the Sultāns. These were tied up at the waist. They also put on a four-cornered head-dress embroidered with gold thread and studded with jewels. The Hindu aristocracy adopted the same dress except that instead of the long drawers they wore a *dhotī* trimmed with gold lace. Common Hindus were scantily dressed 'They cannot wear more clothing' says Nicola Conti 'on account of the great heat, and for the same reason wear only sandals, with purple and gold ties, as we see in ancient statues.'³³

Orthodox Muslims wore a long turban or a tall *darwesh* cap, loose gowns and wooden sandals. Hindu ascetics wore a simple loin-cloth. Poor men wore no caps or shoes, and did with just a plain *dhotī*.

Hindu women wore a *sārī*, a long sleeved bodice and brassières. Sometimes a loose skirt (*lahangā*) and a scarf to cover

the head were worn. Muslim women of the upper classes wore loose drawers, a shirt and a long scarf along with the usual veil. In Gujarāt and in the Deccan women wore leather shoes ornamented with gold and silk. Ornaments of gold and silver were universally worn.

Food was generally cheap. Wheat was rarely eaten, being 'the most expensive article',³⁴ but other grains like barley, peas, lintels, *māsh*, *lobiyā* and sesame were common. There were as many as twenty-one varieties of rice. Unleavened bread, pulse, meat and vegetable curries, meat-soup, churned curd, dates and *halwā* (a sweet pudding of flour or sugar-candy) were generally the food of the rich class. Boiled rice and pulse (*khichrī*) and a paste of rice flour (*sattū*) were eaten by the poor.

Muslims generally lived on a meat diet, the flesh of cows and goats particularly. Hīndus too ate meat, but largely had vegetarian food. Cucumber, pumpkin, jack-fruit, turnip, carrot, asparagus, beet, onion, garlic, *Karelā* (a gourd), thyme, fennel and green leaves (*sāg*) are often mentioned.

A number of fruits were taken as dessert, like melons, water-melons, oranges citron, limes, bananas, plums, figs, and of course the famous Indian mango. Sugar-cane was abundantly grown. Apples, grapes, pears, pomegranates and dried fruits were imported.

Water was obtained for drinking from wells, rivers, reservoirs and tanks. Gaṅgā water was considered purest. When Muḥammad bin Taghluq shifted his capital to Daulatābād, Gaṅgā water was carried to him for drinking, although the carrier took forty days to reach him. Sherbets were popular, and so was wine, despite its disapproval by orthodox Muslims. After dinner betels were by far more relished than anything else. 'The inhabitants of India' the chronicler says 'have little taste for wine and intoxicating drinks, but content themselves with betel, an agreeable drug, the use of which is permitted without the slightest objection'.³⁵ The betel was India's gift to the Muslims,

34 *Masālik*, Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Trübner, vol. 3, p. 583.

35 *Masālik*, Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Trübner, vol. III, p. 381.

and they took an immense liking to it. 'Abdur-Razzaq was all praises for it: 'It gives a colour to and brightens the countenance. It causes intoxication similar to that produced by wine, appeases hunger and excites appetite....It removes the disagreeable smell from the mouth and strengthens the teeth.'³⁶

Muslims dined together, often out of the same plate, but on the same board (*dastar khwān*). Rich Hindus sat at tables for their meals and ate from silver vessels. Others sat on carpets or on mattresses. Brahmins, who were strict vegetarians, often took no onion and garlic in their food. But condiments and spices were a favourite with everyone. Pickles, chillis and chutneys were also popular.

In the Mughal Age

(a) *Indianisation of Society*: The process of Indianisation of Muslim society was completed in Mughal times. Bābur's soldiers had looked on India as foreign land. An *amīr* of his who was particularly homesick wrote on the wall of his Delhi home:

'If safe and sound I cross the Sind
Blacken my face ere I wish for Hind'.

In Akbar's reign an expedition to Kābul had to be abandoned because of the love his soldiers had for India, and their unwillingness to go beyond the Indus. When Jahāngīr's son, the rebel Khusrav, wanted to go to Kābul to secure support for himself, his supporters, both Indians and Afghāns, deserted him on the bank of the Chenab river, and 'doubled back like foxes into Hindustān'. Even the faithful Fīrūz Mewātī did not have the spirit to befriend Dārā when he decided to cross the Indus. Poet Shaida exclaimed that India was the most blessed place on earth, for it was here that Adam came first after his expulsion from paradise.³⁷

Muslims joined with Hindus in claiming India as their

³⁶ Major, 'Abdur-Razzāq, 32.

³⁷ Fatehpurī, *Mirat-ul-Khayāl*, pp. 109-11.

motherland. They took part in many prominent Hindu festivals. We find *rākhi* or *rakshā bandhan* being celebrated in Akbar's Court. The emperor participated in the Hindu festival of the lamps, *dīpāvalī*. Aurangzib tried to...re-establish the exclusiveness of Islām. Among his many measures toward this end was the prohibition of religious music on the day of the Prophet's birthday. But Shaikh Yahyā Chistī, the Sūfī saint refused to give it up, and even the uncompromisingly fanatic emperor had to yield. Another saint, Shaikh Taqī-ud-dīn Wāiz would recite from the pulpit verses from a *masnavī* in the Hindi language and keep his hearers spellbound when asked why he chose Hindu, the Shaikh said, 'The whole of it is divine truth and pleasing in subject, worthy of ecstatic contemplation for devout lovers, and conformable to the interpretation of some of the verses (*ayāt*) of the *Qurān*. Moreover, by its public recitation human hearts are taken captive'. This Indianisation of society can be seen in the life and manners of both Hīndus and Muslims of the Mughal age.

(b) *Dress*—The dress worn during this period appeared to have won the admiration of foreigners. Della Valle wrote about it 'I was so taken with the Indian dress in regard to its cleanliness and easiness and for its goodly show that I caused one to be made for myself complete in every point, and I carry it with me to show it in Italy'.³⁸

There were a variety of dresses, with a marked difference of course between those worn by the high class and those of the poor. The '*Āin-i-Akbarī*' describes eleven types of coats. Mughal kings were particular about dress and set the fashions for the nobles. Humāyūn popularised the open waistcoat, Akbar wore a long embroidered cloak, and sometimes a *dhotī* of delicate silk. Jahāngīr preferred a sleeveless coat. Shāh Jahān delighted in gorgeous and gaudy dresses, but Aurangzib was inclined to simplicity. Whatever the kind of dress, these Mughal emperors wore, they took pleasure in decking themselves with jewellery. Speaking about Jahāngīr's dress, for example, Sir Thomas Roe says, 'On his head he wore a rich turban with a plume of heron's feathers, not many, but long. On one side

38 Della Valle, p. 23.

hung a ruby unset, as long as a walnut, on the other side, a diamond as large, in the middle an emerald like a heart, much bigger. His staff was wound about with a chain of great pearls, rubies and diamonds, drilled. About his neck, he wore a chain of three strings of most excellent pearls, the largest I ever saw. About his elbows armlets set with diamonds, and on his wrist three rows of several sorts, his hands bare, but almost on every finger a ring.'

People of the higher classes were also particular about their dress. Rich Mohammedans wore *shalwars* (tight coats) either single, double or wadded, pyjamas loose round the waist but tight on the ankles, and at home just cloth (*lungī*) wrapped round them.

Middle class people wore long shirts and narrow waist-coats. In winter they wore a short coat (*bandhī*) padded with cotton. A vest known as *qabā* was worn as an outer garment. This was fashioned in a variety of ways sometimes woven with gold thread and lined with sable. It was secured with strings which Hindus tied on the left side and Mohammedans on the right. Shawls and scarves were used, the latter often being tied round the waist. Men of fashion carried a dagger with a handle of gold set with precious stones. Gold bracelets and ear-rings were worn.

The common people could not afford to be lavish in dress. Workmen, labourers and peasants wore just a loin-cloth. In winter they wore small quilted coats to ward off the cold. In north India they also put on turbans or caps. The urban poor wore plain *dhotīs*. Scholars, ascetics and men of learning wore simple but striking clothes. Describing the dress of a great Hindu scholar, Kavindrāchārya, who lived in Shāh Jahān's times, Bernier says 'He wore a white scarf tied about his waist and hanging half-way down the leg, and another tolerably large scarf of red silk which he wears as a cloak on his shoulders'.³⁹

Caps and turbans were worn in many shapes and varieties. It was considered disrespectful to appear bare-headed before one's elders. Although shoes and sandals were worn, stockings were not in fashion, the reason being, as Bernier notes

39 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, Constable, p. 341.

the hot climate of the country. There are references, however, to socks (*mozās*). Shoes were pointed in front and open above with low heels. The richer class used shoes of leather or velvet, often richly ornamented. Sandals and slippers were popular. Pyrard mentions that Brahmins of Calicut wore brown slippers 'much pointed in front, the point raised high with a knob of the same leather'.⁴⁰ Wooden sandals with leather straps were also used.

Hindu women wore *sārīs* and on *angiyā* or small jacket beneath it to cover and support their breasts. About the *angiyā* stavorinus says 'They support their breasts and press them upwards by a piece of linen which passes under the arms and is made fast on the back'.⁴¹ The lower garment was a petticoat. Often a half smock of very flimsy material which hardly concealed the skin was worn with a silk or cotton waist-coat over it. Muslim women wore loose shirts and tight breeches tied at the waist by a silver or silk string, one end of which often trailed down to their knees. Rich women wore *qabās* of fine Kāshmir wool, and fine quality shawls. When they moved out in public they put on white *burqās* to veil their faces. Princesses wore turbans or an elaborate head-dress (*lachaq*) in the form of a square mantle doubled into a triangle and fastened at the chin. Poor women were barefooted. The higher class ones used various patterns of shoes and ornamented slippers.

(c) *Ornaments*—Among Muslims men did not wear ornaments, except that some of them wore amulets. Mughal emperor, however, decked themselves liberally with them. Hindus wore ear-rings and rings on their fingers. Rājput men were fond of bracelets also.

Women, whether Hindu or Muslim, wore a great variety of ornaments. Even toddlers were adorned with a chain of gold and silver, with bells tied round the waist and anklets. Abu-'I-Fazl mentions thirty-seven ornaments worn by women. From head to foot women went decked with all kinds of jewellery. There were ornaments for the head forehead, ears, nose, neck,

40 Francois Pyrard *The Voyage to the East Indies, the Maldives etc*, (Trans. Gray and Bell, Hakluyt Society, London, vol. I, p. 376.

41 *Voyages to the East Indies*, Trans. Willcocke, vol. 1, p. 415.

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arms, wrist, fingers, waist, ankles legs, feet toe and instep.⁴²

Although ornaments were usually of gold or silver, those who could not afford the precious metals used ornaments of copper, glass and tortoise-shell. Rural people made necklaces of cloves or of base metals. Elephant's tusks, ivory and mother-of-pearl were also used.

(d) Toilet—Soap was known in Mughal times. Powders hair-dyes, hair removers, creams, perfumes, hair oil, pounded sandal-wood and other such cosmetics were greatly in use. Nur Jahān, who set many fashions in dress, experimented in perfumes also. Her mother discovered *itar* of roses 'a drop of which,' as Jahāngīr wrote, 'when rubbed on the palm of the hand, scents the whole assembly'. Akbar created a special perfumery department known as *khusbū khānā*.

Indian women excelled in beauty, as Orme noticed, 'Nature seems to have showered beauty on the fairer sex throughout Indostān with a more lavish hand than in most other countries'. Women were very particular about their toilet. Eyelids were blackened with collyrium, and shoulders and breasts anointed with a paste of sandal-wood powder, medicated camphor and sweet-smelling constituents. Lips were stained red by betel-juice for women were even fonder than men of the betel. High class ladies blackened the crevices between their teeth with *missi*, and darkened their eyelashes with antimony. The palms of the hand and the feet were dyed red with henna. *Gulguna* and *ghaza* (red powder) was used as facial makeup. Hair styles were various and bewitching. Young girls made their hair into tresses and bound them with ribbons. Long hair was considered graceful. Sometimes women gathered their hair into a bun and stuck a gold bodkin in the centre. Vermilion was applied

42 *sisphūl* (head ornament), *māng* (for the hair parting), *kotbiladar* and *bindulī* (for the forehead), *karnaphūl* on *bālī* (for the ear), *nath besar* or *laung* (for the nose), *hār* or *guluband* (for the neck), *bāzuband* (armlet), *kangan* and *chūrī* (for the wrist), *kardhanī* or *chihdr khantikā* (for the waist), *pāyal*, Arabic *khal khal* (for the legs), *ghūnghrū* (for ankles), *bhānk* and *bichhwāh* (for the instep), and *anwat* (for the big toe).

to the parting of the hair of a married girl. It was also applied on the middle of the forehead as a small round mark. Spectacles were known, and perhaps introduced into India by Persian and Arab travellers.

Men also used devices to beautify themselves and to look presentable. Akbar took more than an hour for his dress and toilet. Hindus bathed every day in some river or stream. Bathing houses and *hammāms* did a brisk trade. In these one could have a good bath, a shampoo, a brisk rub down the back and finally an application of perfume and sweet essences. Mirrors, sometimes of steel, were commonly used. Nobles and upper class men anointed their bodies with sandal and scented oils. In the hot weather they used rose-water, *santak* and *argajah* (cosmetics) to keep cool. Tooth-pastes, combs' toothpicks, hair-dyes were widely used. Hindus were usually clean-shaven or kept small beards, while Muhammadans had long beards, usually reaching to their chests. Moustaches were kept by both. Hindus applied *tikā* marks on their foreheads. Barbers went about the streets with a towel flung on their shoulders and a mirror in their hands. All men were anxious to look their best, as Grose observes. 'None are more studious' he says 'of the cleanliness and suppleness of the body'.⁴³

(e) *Games and Amusements*—As in other things the games and diversions of the rich and the poor differed inasmuch as those of the former were expensive and exclusive while the common people had simpler ones. Some, like cards, chess and *chaupar* were within the reach of all. Hunting, animal fights, polo and gardening were recreations of the privileged class. There were a number of other amusements also like dancing, music, visiting fairs, races, archery and swordsmanship, fishing, boating, riding, magic shows, plays, *mushāirās* (gathering of poets) story-telling, boxing hockey and wrestling. In leisure time one could relax with a hubble-bubble (hookah) or just chew betels.

Playing-cards were all in pictures. There were 144 in a pack. The highest card was a king on horseback then a *vazīr* on horseback followed by cards having pictures of horses from one to

43 F.S. Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies With General Reflection on the Trade of India*, London, vol. 1, pp. 113-4.

ten. Cards were played by kings as well as by commoners. Chess was very popular. There were sixty-four squares, eight on each side. Akbar used to play it with living slave girls as pieces. When Jahāngir's ambassador visited the Persian court he played a game of chess which he lost, and in order to comply with the bet he had to bray like an ass! *Chaupar*, which resembled the modern game of Ludo, was very popular with Aurangzib's daughter, Zeb-un-Nisā. It could be played by two persons, or four and more. It was an absorbing pastime and matches went on sometimes for three months. The *chandal mandal* was a modified form of *chaupar* which could be played by a larger number of players, often sixteen. The *bisat-i-nishāt* was a sophisticated game played by Humāyūn with his courtiers. There were a number of other indoor games too which were popular with the common people.⁴⁴

Dancing meant not so much taking part in a dance, as is the Western concept of ballroom dances, but watching girls dance. As this involved paying a generous sum of money to the dancing girls, it was meant mostly to amuse the rich. Music, called the 'talisman of knowledge' by Abu-'l-Fazl was within the reach of all. Mughal kings (with the exception of Aurangzib) patronised it, and a number of famous musicians flocked to their courts, like Tān Sēn, Rām Dās, Lāl khān, Sawād Khān and so forth. Plays staging religious epics like the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* etc., were often staged young boys mostly acting in them like in the plays of Shakespeare in England. Famous poets would recite their poems in *mushāīrās*. Fairs and pilgrimages provided a lot of diversion. Smoking was the commoner's pastime. Fishing, boating, gardening, riding and animal fights were the diversion of kings and nobles and those who had plenty of leisure.

(f) *Houses and Furniture*—Living conditions varied greatly according to status. Royal palaces were built on a grand scale consisting of the inner quarters for the queens and princesses,

44 Some of these were, *gutīs* (of which there were many forms), *tānt-jānt*, *mughal-pathān*, *lām turkī*, *sat gol*, *bhāg chal* (and its variations, a kind of tiger-play), *golekuish*, *bherī-barkī* (sheep and goat) played with cowries, *nard* (backgammon, perhaps introduced by the Muslims).

and the outer portion containing the *dīwān-i-ām*, *dīwān-i-khās*, arsenal and so forth. There were huge pleasure gardens, groves tanks *hammāms* and pavilions for watching animal fights. Palaces of Hindu kings were more or less on the same pattern, though sometimes planned more for comfort than for architectural beauty. In the middle there usually was an open courtyard flanked by the public courts and women's apartments. Sometimes, as in the case of Rājā Bir Singh's palace at Datīā, there were underground apartments (*tahkhānās*) which kept cool in summers. Houses of the nobles and those of the upper classes had flat roofs to provide terraces where one could walk about in the fresh air. Rooms were adequately ventilated with doors and windows. Most of the houses had gardens, and tanks which were filled by oxen-drawing water from wells and being delivered by a lead pipe. Houses were divided into the women's and men's quarters. Visitors were received in the parlour. There was an inner courtyard, bedrooms, kitchens and lavatories. Often the front of the house was built of stone, and cemented with lime. Sculptures in relief in teak wood painted in various colours decorated the upper panel. Foreign travellers admired these Indian mansions and found them 'noble, elegant, spacious and pleasant'.

Houses of the middle classes (which included traders, merchant and petty *amīrs*) were modest. Bricks, burnt tiles, lime, cane, clay and straw were their building material. Some of them had two storeys or even three, with beautiful terrace roofs. They were airy and commodious.

The poor people had humble dwellings. They lived in thatched huts, each having only one apartment and almost without any ventilation. Walls were of mud and the roofs thatched. There was one living apartment and one separate room for the granary. There was only one single entrance and one could not enter the hut without stooping. Large families stayed in a single hut. They had only a mat to sleep on and a pit to beat their rice in.

The Indian mode of sitting was such that chairs were not needed. Even then elbow chairs were used by the rich. 'Abdur-Razzāq, the Persian ambassador mentions that chairs and settees were used by the courtesans of Vijayanagar. Stools and *pīrhās*

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raised wooden planks for sitting were largely used. Bedsteads were found in most homes. The poor used a simple *khāt* (cot) woven with cords. Beds of the aristocracy were ornamented with gold, silver or even jewels and diamonds. Nuniz mentions beadsteads with gold legs in the palace of Achyuta Rāya of Vijayanagara. It had a silk mattress. The round pillows on it had large seed-pearls at their ends. There were portable beds. Bernier mentions one of very strong but light cane.

The poor and common people had scanty bedding with just a sheet or two. The richer class had mattresses, coverlets and pillow covers of silk, often beautifully embroidered. Costly blankets (called *indra kambal*) and pillows stuffed with mustard seed were particularly prized. From Gwālior came quilted and embroidered coverlets. Those who could afford them, had mosquito-nets. A king of Vijayanagara had one worked into a silver frame. Carpets, rugs, finely made spreads, curtains and costly tapestry hangings adorned the houses of nobles and men of means. Porcelain vases, flower-pots and dainty chinaware were kept for decoration. Other luxuries in rich households were small hand fans made of palm-leaf, ivory vellum, silk, silver figree, huge linen fans suspended from the ceiling and pulled by ropes from outside, fine cabinets, chests and boxes, and gold and silver vessels. Paes noticed a room in the Vijayanagara palace decorated with ivory carvings of lotus, roses and other flowers.

In living, manners, dress, food and such other matters we find a wide gulf existing between the rich and the poor. On the one hand we have all kinds of luxuries which amazed foreign visitors, on the other a bare existence in which essential articles were all that was, within means. In fact there were two separate worlds, that of poverty and that of abundance. There was hardly any meeting ground between them. The rich *amīr* and nobles lived their sheltered lives unmindful of the misery of the common people. But one can hardly blame the Mughal rulers for it, when even centuries afterwards, basically the gulf between the rich and the poor remains the same.

3. RITES, CEREMONIES AND CUSTOMS

Marriage

1000-1300--The view that a man of the higher castes could not marry a low caste girl persisted. Such a marriage was of an inferior type because it was actuated by desire. Girls were generally married at an early age. Although the *Smriti* law provided for the traditional form of marriage, in actual practice there were many other unconventional ones. We find the literature of the period mentioning (1) Elopement of a girl with her lover (2) Marriage of a Brahmin with the wife of a merchant who had been deserted by him (3) Marriage of a Brahmin with a daughter of Shavara chief (4) Of a courtesan with a fisherman (5) Of a Kshatriya prince with a Chāṇḍāla maiden (6) Of a Chāṇḍāla youth with a princess (7) Of a young fisherman with a girl of royal blood. A marriage in the unorthodox manner against the *Smriti* injunction was that of the Kalachuri king Lakshmīkarna with Āvalladevī, a girl of the Hūṇa race. So too were the *svayamvara* marriages in which a girl selected a husband from many suitors.

According to the *Smriti* law the father of the girl was her guardian, not the mother. It was incumbent on him to marry off his daughter at the proper time. Al-Bīrūnī noticed that marriages were not performed between near relations, as provided by the *Smriti*. But he also observed that a number of injunctions of the conventional code of marriage were, in practice, not followed. Thus punishment for adultery was more strict than prescribed. The adulteress was usually driven out of the husband's home, and banished. Re-marriage of widows was prohibited and divorce was not allowed. Kings kept many wives. Marco Polo mentions that the king of Ma'bar had five hundred wives, and the king of Coil three hundred.

In the literature of the period kings seem to have the privilege of marrying a number of wives and in addition having concubines. The chief wife was to be a good Kshatriya girl 'young and beautiful and having good manners'. The other wives could be of the Vaishya and Shūdra class. In addition

the king could disport with wanton women (*vilāsinīs*); in other words, concubines.

It will be clear from the above account that therew as a lot of relaxation in the *Smritī* laws in relation to marriage. In theory they remained the guidelines. In practice they were transgressed with impunity.

In the Sultānate Period— Inter-caste marriages between the three upper castes were forbidden by *smritī* laws. If a man married a girl of a different caste it would be only a marriage for pleasure and the couple could not perform religious sacrifices together.

The early marriage of girls is emphasised. Although a girl should not be given away to an unworthy husband, the parents have a moral responsibility to marry her even before puberty. There was disproportion between the ages of the bride and the bridegroom. If parents failed to marry her; a girl could choose her own partner in a *svayamvara* ceremony.

The eight forms of marriage mentioned by the *Smritī* are emphasised and all of them are considered to be valid. Even if the seven steps are not taken together at the time of the actual marriage they can be taken later, and thus the two become husband and wife. A marriage can be annulled at any time before taking the seven steps on the ground of defects on either side or on the death (before this ceremony) of the bridegroom. In the case of such death the girl can be married to the younger brother of the deceased or to a man of the same *gotra*, or failing both, any other man. If a girl is married to someone physically disabled in ignorance, the man should be medically treated. If he is cured the two may marry, but if not the girl can be married to another instead. Regarding widow remarriage, the authorities seem, on the whole, to favour it.

Husbands are enjoined to maintain their wives properly provided 'they behave well, are chaste and gentle'. Even a wicked wife should be looked after. If a husband deserts his faithful wife he should be fined by the king and asked to take her back. If he doesn't he should be made to give her one third of his property if he is a man of means, and if he is poor, whatever is required for her maintenance. On her part the

wife is expected to be completely dependent on her husband. When he goes abroad she should stay indoor and not look on any man. She should not despise her husband on any account whatsoever.

A wife may be abandoned for certain faults, but not on the ground of having connections with a man of a lower caste. In some cases an abandoned woman may be taken back on her performing the prescribed penance. Abandonment could be for the following reasons 1. A girl who has been polluted by rape etc. 2. Unchastity and wantonness. 3. For serious crime, poisoning, black magic and abortion. 4. For wilfully leaving home on being assaulted by her guardians for some fault (but if she returns within, ten days she can be taken back).

As regards the time-honoured custom of *satī* (self-immolation), though views differ, the consensus is that a widow may voluntarily burn herself on her husband's funeral pyre, but should not be compelled to do so. While great merit attends such an act, the widow may also achieve bliss by leaving a life of chastity. Although foreign visitors testify to occurrences of *satī*, they also bear out the view that the rite was not obligatory. Ibn Batūtah says that it was not compulsory for a widow to immolate herself, though it was considered praiseworthy. Odoric says that widows having sons were not to burn themselves.⁴⁵

One fundamental difference between Hindus and Muslims in respect of marriage was that, following the Arabs, Muslims married cousins and other near relations. The Hindu ceremony of dressing the bride (*solā sringār*; *sola*=sixteen *sringār*=adornments) had become familiar to the Muslims. They called it *half-o-nuh*. The Hindu custom of carrying away the bride (*rakshasa* form of marriage was also sometimes adopted by Muslims. Ibn Batūtah witnessed the marriage of Muhammad Tughluq's sister being performed in this manner with a Sayyid noble. While one wife was considered ideal Muslims often had more than one. It is true that learned men interpreted the relevant Islāmic injunction as allowing two, three or four wives, but the observation in it was 'if you fear you cannot be equitable then only one.' To do equal justice to all wives was, it is

45 Yule and Cordier, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, vol. 2, p. 133.

obvious, well nigh impossible. In practice however few Muslims confined themselves to one wife.

In the Mughal Period

Marriage was considered most desirable by Hindus and Muslims alike. Manucci says that Hindus regarded it 'as one of the greatest felicities of human life'.⁴⁶ Abu-'I-Fazl says 'If there be no marriages the fountain-head of humanity shall become choked and the stream of divine benevolence shall sink into the sand'.⁴⁷

Hindus married their girls even when they were minors. A Brahmin general in the *peshwā's* service considered it a 'veritable calamity and a scandal' if he could not forthwith find out a match for his daughter turned nine.⁴⁸ The *rājā* of Sangaldip⁴⁹ married his daughter when she was only two years old. Although a girl went to her husband's home much after, when she attained puberty, the custom was doubtless an evil one, and condemned by foreign visitors who termed it as barbaric. Akbar issued orders that girls were not to marry before the age of fourteen, and boys before sixteen. Though a social ill can hardly be curbed by laws and injunctions, the measure was all for the good. Incidentally Akbar sought to reform marriage customs of Muslims also. He frowned upon marriages among near relations. He actually forbade marriage of a man with a woman older to him by more than twelve years, as he found many Muslim boys marrying old women for their wealth. He was also in favour of having one wife and said 'One woman sufficeth for one man'.⁵⁰ Curiously enough he did not himself practice what he preached, and married three hundred women

46 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Trans. Irvin, vol. III, p. 54.

47 *Akbar-nāma*, Trans. H. Beveridge, vol. III, p. 677.

48 Altekar, *Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation*, Banaras, 1938, p. 73.

49 Jayasi, *Padmāvat*, (Urdu trans.) p. 96.

50 The usual was of course four, and Akabar's foster brother once gave a very practical justification for it. 'A man must marry one woman of Hindustān' he said 'to rear up children; one wife from Khurasan to do the household work; one woman from Irān to keep company

Inter-caste marriages were out of fashion among Hindus in Mughal times, although there seems to be no rigidity about the prohibition. The bridegroom was required to be older than the bride. Widow marriages were not favoured. Opinion was markedly in favour of monogamy, though there were instances a Hindu having more than one wife. A second wife could be taken if the first was sick, barren, or if all the children born happened to die. Marriages were arranged through mediators. Among Muslims, too, marriage depended on reports of those who arranged it. The reformer emperor, Akbar, considered it to be a bad practice not to give weight to the wishes of the boy and the girl. He ordained that they as well as the parents should have a say, and appointed officers to 'go into the circumstances of both parties'.⁵¹

Marriages were expensive. Both Hindus and Muslims spent lavishly on them. A Hindu of ordinary means would spend about four to five thousand rupees.⁵² Bengali merchants spent almost a lakh, besides numerous presents.⁵³ The colossal sum of thirty-two *lakhs* was spent on Dārā's marriage.⁵⁴

The Hindu marriage ceremony had many variations, but fundamentally the procedure was

1. The marriage party consisting of the boy's friends and relations accompanied him to the bride's house with a band and fireworks.
2. Garlanding of the boy by the bride and of the bride by the bridegroom.
3. The handing over of the bride by her father (*kanyā-dāna*; *kanyā*=maiden; *dāna*=offering).

any talk'. When Akbar asked 'And what about the fourth?' he replied, 'One woman from Transoxiana to whip up the other three and keep peace!' (Quoted in M. Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India* Lucknow, 1958, p. 125).

51 Abu-'l-Fazl, *Āin-i-Akbarī*, (Tran. Blochmann), 1873, vol. 1, p. 278.

52 *Journal of the Sind Historical Society* (Aug. 1940).

54 F.S. Grose, *A Voyage to the East Indies etc.*, London, vol. 1, pp. 234-5.

54 K.R. Qanungo, Dara Singh, Calcutta, 1936, p. 14.

4. Joining of the hands of the bride and the bridegroom (*pānigrahaṇa*).
5. Threefold round of the fire, and the seven steps taken together by the couple.
6. The departure of the bride to her husband's home (*bidā*). In Malabar the bridegroom tied a piece of gold (*tāli*) round the bride's neck. In Bengal and some other places the couple played ceremonial dice after the marriage had been concluded. Sometimes among the poor the ceremony was very simple. The couple and the priest went round a consecrated cow and calf, which were then given with other small presents to the priest. The evil of the dowry system was very much there. Poor fathers found it very difficult to marry their daughters.

There were no caste restrictions among Muslims, but marriages between Shiāhs, Sunnīs, Turks and Indian Muslims were rare. Marriages between near relations were common. Royal consent to marriages between children of nobles was essential. Mughal kings married their sons, but rarely their daughters.

Muslim marriage celebrations lasted three to four days. The main ceremonies were as follows:

1. Sending of four precious gifts along with red dye, for the bride (*sachaq*). In Bengal this was called the *halud* (turmeric) ceremony. Turmeric was applied to the bride's body.
2. The actual wedding was celebrated a few month's after and began with the *hennābandī* in which the bridegroom's hands were dyed red with henna by girls from behind a curtain.
3. The bridegroom's hands were washed with rose-water. After an hour or so he would drink a glass of water in confirmation of the marriage.
4. The *nikāh*, performed by the *qāzī* or his deputy before witnesses. The consent of the bride and bridegroom was taken and the amount of the marriage settlement

(*mahr*) announced. The expenditure of Muslim marriages, as for the Hindu ones, was sometimes quite lavish. About twelve *lakhs* were spent on scents, illumination and fireworks alone, in the marriage of the brother of Sirāj-ud-Daulāh.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

1000-1300— There is peculiar inconsistency in the position assigned to women in the interim period between the end of the Hindu rule and the beginning of the Turkish one. On the one hand they were considered to be slavishly dependent on their husbands so much so that they had almost no entity of their own. On the other we have women as rulers, as for example Sūryamatī, queen of Ananta, queen Ballamahādevī of the Ālupa dynasty (in south Canara) and queen Rudrāmbā who ruled the Kākatīya kingdom for nearly forty years and won the admiration of Marco Polo. When judging the status of Hindu women in society, however, one has to consider the classes which formed the majority, and that would be the common people. Here we find the orthodox view predominant. The wife, we are told, must never be made to feel that she is independent. She should be so much kept occupied with her domestic work that she does not have leisure for anything else. In matters regarding unchastity, adultery and so forth, it is only the woman who is spoken of. The unchaste or wayward husband is never called into account. An abducted woman could not be taken back into society even if she carried out the prescribed penance. Women were considered unfit to give evidence before judges because of 'their proneness to untruth'.

Nevertheless in some respects women were given a better deal than before.

1. If the wife suffered from a chronic disease, but was devoted to her husband he could leave her only with her permission.
2. If she couldn't give him a son, he had to wait for a reasonable period before taking another wife.
3. She had to get adequate maintenance amounting to the

- sum equal to that spent on the second marriage or given to the second wife. If a separate *strīdhana* has been set apart for her, then half the sum alongwith that.
4. The wife had to be maintained even if she committed adultery, and taken back with full conjugal rights after undergoing the prescribed penance. Only in extreme cases when she is guilty of causing abortion or attempting to kill her husband may she be driven out of the house.
 5. If the husband wrongfully deserted his good wife he rendered himself liable to punishment.
 6. The law-givers of the period gave women greater right to property than before. She could inherit the property of her male relations, and could succeed to the whole estate of her sonless dead husband on condition that she was chaste and the property was divided when he died.

In general we find a definite advance in taking a wider view of women's rights as compared to the ancient law-givers like Manu and others. But the idea 'he for god and she for god in him' was still the basis of many of the regulations for women, and they suffered a number of illogical restrictions.

In the Sultanate Period

The main developments in this period were in the domain of women's right to property and *strīdhana*. The complete dependence of women on thier husbands and male relations is emphasised as before. Their religious disability, like disqualification for Vedic study, is also mentioned. Women were, however, liable to lesser punishment than men for many of the crimes. Where a man was given the death penalty, a women was only deprived of a limb. Penances, too, were lighter for women. Even unchastity was condoned if the prescribed penance was undergone.

In regard to right to property the law-givers are more generous to women than before. If a wife got her share of *strīdhana* she was yet to receive a share equal to half of what sons

would get. If she had no *strīdhana* she was entitled to an equal share. The widow was considered to be the foremost heir of a deceased sonless male divided from his family. The wife was the first heir if chaste, but not otherwise. She was entitled to all the property (movables and immovables).

Strīdhana, we are told, includes what is inherited, acquired by partition, received as gift, or obtained as treasure-trove etc., and what is obtained as nuptial fee. Some authorities place a limit on its extent or on the extent to which the woman can dispose of her *strīdhana*. The husband could normally not take any portion of the *strīdhana*. If he did so even with his wife's consent he had to pay back its value. In succession to *strīdhana* unmarried girls are preferred to married ones and those unsettled to those settled.

The advent of the Muslims had an adverse effect on the position of women in society. Even with the reservation of Hindu thinkers on their duties and obligations, they had significant rights to property and inheritance etc. Women had been successful rulers. In the two centuries preceding the Muslim conquest there were a number of women poets, painters, dancers and mathematicians. Manu the ancient law-giver had said, 'Where women are not honoured there cannot be a proper home.'⁵⁵ The Muslim conquest was particularly harsh to women. They were the greatest sufferers in the aftermath of wars. Dishonoured, enslaved, the prey of insatiable lust, the best they could expect concubinage in a Muslim harem. The only way out of such a miserable fate was death. And this was what Hindu women sought by wholesale immolation in the rite of *jauhar*. The Islāmic view about women was not flattering. The worth of a woman as a witness was considered to be half that of a man. Khalif Abu Bakr held that reliance on women would lead to humiliation. The general opinion was that women were 'not to be relied on like men; because even if women belong to a trustworthy and great family, yet they themselves do not belong to that class which characterises a trustworthy person'.⁵⁶ The veil which was brought into India after the Muslim

55 *Manusmṛiti*, ch. III, p 55-60.

56 *Baharistān*, I, 344.

conquest began to be adopted since then.⁵⁷

The result of all these liabilities and the insecurity for women, was the dread of having a girl as child. Amīr Khusrav laments over the birth of a daughter. Nizāmuddin Auliya says in *Afzālul Favaid* 'It will be the day of resurrection when women will ride horses or walk about in the streets ... Great harm would be done if women were to get freedom'.⁵⁸

The position of women in the Sultānate times was not a happy one. Conquest, massacres and plunder made life insecure in both towns and villages. As in the sphere of religion the choice after each conquest was Islām or death, the social sphere for women it was captivity and dishonour, or the fire of the *jauhar*.

In the Mughal Period

The Islāmic influences which had been introduced into India with the Muslim conquest became more deeply engrained with the Mughal rulers. Akbar was a reformist, and taking notice of some of the evils both in Hindu and Muslim society, he tried to remove them. But social ills need enlightenment rather than the whip. So his injunctions could touch only the fringe. The advent of Islām resulted in a kind of eruption of the virus of evil already present in regard to polygamy, *purdāh* and female seclusion. So far the Hindu women would veil themselves only before the elders of the family. Partly in imitation of the custom of the rulers and partly to protect themselves, they adopted the veil in society too. Seclusion, which started by being their shield and armour, soon became a social habit. In truth one can't for long remain unaffected by the atmosphere in which one lives. As Byron says 'So much a long communion tends to make us what we are'.⁵⁹ Even the liberal Akbar had to issue orders that 'If a young woman was found running about the

57 The *ghūmghat* existed from before too, but this was more a domestic custom for the newly married wife, rather than a social one for all women.

58 *Afzālul Favaid*, 78-9.

59 *The Prisoner of Chillon*.

streets and bazaars of the town and while so doing did not veil herself or allowed herself to become unveild ... she was to go to the quarters of the prostitutes and take up the profession'.⁶⁰ Women stopped going out, except on very special occasions, and then too heavily veiled and in palanquins, surrounded on all sides by servants and eunuchs. When a princess wanted to go out on an elephant, the animal was made to enter a tent near the palace gate, and the mahout covered his face so that he might not see princess when she entered the covered howdah.⁶¹ Bernier notes that 'too near approach to the ladies of the seraglio', was studiously avoided.⁶² So strict was the restriction that when the wife of Amī Khān, governor of Kābul, exposed her face in leaping from the back of a run away elephant in order to save herself, he promptly renounced her.⁶³ Middle class Muslim ladies also went about veiled, but it was so with Hindu middle class women. They would only cover their heads by a shawl. Women of the lower classes, too were from the veil. They went out to fairs without restriction. They bathed in public at riversides. Women water-carriers moved about freely without *purdāh*.

In the matter of divorce and remarriage, Muslims were more liberal. A Hindu woman could not remarry on her husband's death. More likely than not, she would burn herself on her husband's funeral pyre, for the odium attached to a widow was so great that widowhood was worse than death. Mohammedans allowed their widows to remarry and most of them did. In another respect Muslim women were much better off. They had a definite share in the inheritance with an absolute right to dispose it. Unlike Hindu women they retained this right even after marriage. The custom of *mahr* also ensured provision for Muslim women in case of divorce.

Women often earned their own living, particularly among the lower middle class. Medicine, midwifery and teaching were

60 Badāūnī, *Muntakhāb-ut-Tawārīkh*, vol. II, p. 391-2.

61 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. II, pp. 333-4.

62 Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 374.

63 J.N. Sarkar, *Studies in Mughal India*, Calcutta, 1919, p. 116.

the professions practiced. Music and dancing were other spheres.

Many women distinguished themselves in art, literature and administration. Mīrā Bāi, Salimā Sultānā (niece of Humāyūn), Nūr Jahān, Sītī-un-Nisā and Zeb-un-Nisā (Aurangzīb's eldest daughter) distinguished themselves in Persian poetry. In Sanskrit poetry there were Ramabhadramba, Madhuravani and Tirumalamba. In administration there were Maham Anaga, Akbar's chief nurse, Rānī Durgāvatī, the Chandel princess of Gondwāna, Rānī Karmavati, Chānd Bibī of Ahmadnagar, Nūr Jahān, and the Marāthā queen Tārābāi Mohite.

The high character of Hindu women is praised by the foreign visitors of the period and even by the Mughal emperors themselves. Akbar calls them 'flaming torches of love and fellowship'.⁶⁴ Jahāngīr admires the chastity of Hindu ladies who would not let 'the hand of any unlawful person touch the skirt of their chastity and would perish in flames'.⁶⁵ Tavernier writes about the Hindus Adultery is very rare among them and as for sodomy I never heard it mentioned'.⁶⁶

OTHER CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES

1000-1300

The customs relating to duels and payment of debts have already been mentioned.⁶⁷ Megasthenes refers to the practice of employing a number of women in the king's service. Another peculiar custom prevailing in south India was the self-immolation of selected nobles on the funeral pyre of their kings. Abu Zaid mentions this rite.⁶⁸ About three or four hundred 'companions of the King' would partake of cooked rice eaten by him. This was a kind of pledge. When the king died all of them would

64 Abu-i-Fazl, *Āin-i-Akbarī*, Vol. 3, p. 256.

65 *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī* (Trans. Rogers and Bereridge), Vol. II, p. 268.

66 Tavernier, *The Six Voyages etc.*, Vol. III, p. 181.

67 See Section, *Life Manners, and Pastimes*, 1000-1300.

68 Nainar, *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India*, p. 106-7.

burn themselves on his funeral pyre. The custom was followed in the Chola kingdom also. Marco Polo calls these self-immolators 'the king's Trusty Lieges'.

In Muslim India

Customs and ceremonies among Muslims were varied depending on the status of the family, the locality, individual notions and so forth. The birth of a child, particularly a son, was an event greatly celebrated. Manucci says 'In the case of any great man having a male child born to him, the feasting and banqueting are prolonged, with much music and sounding of instruments and the relations assemble to present congratulations to the new-born child'.⁶⁹ It was considered a good augury to change the residence of the pregnant mother. 'The cord was cut by a thread and put in a small bag kept under the child's pillow with certain cabalistic writings on the bag for forty days'.⁷⁰ Honey was put into the baby's mouth immediately after birth. The mother's breast was pressed so that 'a drop of milk comes out'. *Azān*, the Muslim call to prayer was then sounded in the ears of the babe. The name of the child was given with help of the priest on the day of birth. The other ceremonies attending birth were 1. The *chhathī* (sixth day ceremony) 2. The *aqīqah* (on the seventh day) in which a goat was sacrificed for a girl and two for a boy. 3. The *maktab* ceremony when was four years, four months and four days old. This marked the start of his education. 4. The *sunnat* or circumcision usually performed between the ages of seven and fourteen.

Funeral ceremonies of Muslims were almost the same all over. A chapter of the *Qurān* (the *Yasin*) was read by the bedside of the dying person whose face was turned towards Mecca. Sherbet or holy water from the *zamzam* well of Mecca was poured down his throat. In Mughal times death would be announced by some kind of sign. Abu-'I-Fazl's death was announced to Akbar by the dead courtier's *vakīl* appearing before the emperor

69 Manucci, *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. III, p. 150.

70 *Ibid.*, Vol. p. 246.

with a blue handkerchief tied round his arm. The body was bathed and wrapped in a shroud. For fear of ghosts the corpse was removed through an opening in the wall. Carried on a plank with the face towards *kābā* it was lifted out of the bier and put in the grave, the head pointing north and face towards Mecca, so that when the man rose on the Day of Judgement, he may face that holy place. In the case of women no prayers were said for, as Manucci, writes according to Muslim belief, they have no entry into heaven.⁷¹ After laying the body in the grave, some earth was placed accompanied by recitation from the *Qurān*. After filling up the grave the priest repeated the 'five correct answers' to be given by the deceased to the examining angles on the night of desolation. After twice reciting a *fātihe* for the deceased as well as for all the dead in the cemetery the mourners returned.

The mourning period was forty days. The Hindu custom of shaving after the death of someone dear was followed by Muslims too. A widow of a high class family would cover her palanquin with a green cloth as a sign of mourning for her deceased husband. The relations would visit the grave on the third, tenth and nineteenth day to perform ceremonies and to recite the *fātihe*, and finally on the fortieth day when food, clothes and money to the poor were distributed. The death anniversary would be observed by feeding the poor, illuminating the tombs of the ancestors and recitation of the *Qurān* by the graveside. Devotees, particularly women, visited the tombs often. Aurangzib disfavoured such visits and even forbade whitewashing of the tombs.

Hindus, too, observed elaborate birth and death ceremonies. The birth ceremonies may be summarised as follows :

1. On birth honey and clarified butter was put into the baby's mouth by a gold ring. Bengālī women showered paddy grains and tufts of green grass on the baby. Rich parents gave gifts of gold, jewels and cows to Brahmins.
2. After about forty days the child got a name.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 153.

3. About six months after food was given to the child for the first time (*anna-prāsana* ceremony).
4. After three years there was the *mūṇḍan* or hair shaving ceremony. The child's ears were also usually bored then (*Karṇavedha*).
5. The sacred thread or *upanayāna* ceremony. This was an important ceremony performed before the child was eight years old. It was done by the three higher castes only and was celebrated grandly.
6. The school-going ceremony which was performed after the sacred thread had been worn. A small ceremony was performed in which the teacher and other pupils were served with rice, and the former offered some presents. After the study was completed the *samāvartana* ceremony was performed.

Contrary to the Muslim custom of burial in case of death, Hindus cremated the body except when wood and water were not available, and in certain areas such as Assam and Malabar where burial was quite common. In the case of small children or ascetics, however, sometimes instead of cremation there was burial or immersion in a river. The person in the throes of death was lifted from the bed and placed on the ground, rubbed with cowdung and strewn with green grass. He was placed so that his head was to the north and feet southward. The funeral ceremonies for Hindus were as follows :

1. Holy Gaṅgā water was poured into the corpse's mouth with a ruby, pearl or gold piece in it. Sectarian marks were drawn on the forehead and a *tulsī* leaf placed on the breast. In Bengal the dying man would be carried to a river and the body immersed to the waist in water while women stood in a circle lamenting and beating their naked breasts.
2. The body was bathed and wrapped up in a shroud and carried by the mourners. Relations and friends followed barefoot and bareheaded crying 'Rām Rām'.
3. Ghee was put into the eye, nostrils ears etc. of the deceased and then burnt on the pyre of wood.

Ordinary wood was used for commoners and sandal and better wood for the rich. The pyre was lighted by the nearest male relation of the deceased.

4. The mourners now retired, and a few professional persons called (*bettiao*) got the body burnt completely.
5. The sons and grandsons and the widow got their heads shaved.
6. The mourning period varied. Bones or ashes were collected and with due rites immersed in the river. Rice cooked in milk was offered daily to the deceased till the tenth or twelfth day when the *sapindikaran* ceremony was performed, uniting the *prāta* with the *pitaras*.
7. On the thirteenth day the period of mourning ended and charity was given in the name of the deceased.
8. *Shraddha* was the death anniversary. In this Brahmins were fed gifts given to them.

Etiquette and Manners

Foreign visitors were greatly impressed by the refined manners of Indian society. Mandelso says, 'There is more civility to be found among the Indians than there is among those who pretend to the sole possession of it but seldom accompanying it with the sincerity which even attends it in the Indies'.⁷² Some of the courtesies were those bound up with court etiquette. Other were part of social life.

Mughal emperors were very particular about court etiquette. No one could come in a palanquin within the enclosure of the royal palace. No one could come armed to the *durbār* unless he was permitted by the king. Everyone stood in the king's presence and could not leave unless he left. Misbehaviour was unpardonable. Even the great Shivājī was censured by Aurangzīb when he began to volubly protest in the court against the precedence assigned to him. Lashkar Khān, *mīr bakshī* who once appeared in the *durbār* drunk was taken round the city tied to a horse's tail and later sent to jail. It was both difficult and expensive to have an audience with the king. Nobles had

72 Albert Mandelso, *The Voyages and Travels* etc. London, 1669, p. 33.

to be bribed and costly presents offered as *nazrānā*. Special formalities were observed for ambassadors, and foreign rulers were received with due decorum, often a senior noble being sent to meet him on the way and conduct him to the court. Modes of salutation to the king were prescribed. They varied with different rulers. Kissing the ground, *zamīnbos*, (*zamīn*=ground; *bosā*=kiss), *kornish*, *taslīm*, and *sijdāh* (bowing the forehead to the ground) were some of these.

In ordinary society, too, courtesy and respect to elders was universally observed. Visitors were met at the gate and the host would rise from his seat to greet them. In a Hindu home an elderly guest would receive great veneration. The householder would wash his feet with water mixed with sandal-paste, flowers and rice. To expose the legs or feet while sitting was considered to be bad manners. Politeness in conversation was the hallmark of Indian society. While talking about any matter people were gentle and soft in their words. If they said something in confidence for which they had to come near each other they would hold a handkerchief or scarf in front of their mouths. Respect was shown to elders and those who were learned. Men would cover their heads in their presence, and give them the utmost consideration. Even a great emperor like Akbar stood up to receive the saint Dādū. Aurangzīb was annoyed with Ibrāhīm Khān the Bengal governor because he sat on a couch and let the *qāzīs* and other jurists sit on the floor. On getting Jahāngīr's letter Prince Khurram, although he was in rebellion against his father, 'kissed it and lifted it to his eyes head and while reading it bowed down at every word'.⁷³ Islāmic culture introduced an element of courtesy and politeness which had a lasting impact. Even the language showed it. For example one's own home was spoken of as *garīb khānā* (poor-house) while that of another was *daulat-khānā* (abode of wealth).

73 Padshah Buranjis, *Islāmic Culture*, January 1934, p. 71 (quoted in Dr. P.N. Chopra, *Life and Letters the Mughals*, Ashajanak Pubs., 1976, p. 224).

HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

The subject of Hindu Muslim relations is highly controversial and delicate. It is natural that Hindu and Muslim writers should violently disagree on such an issue, the former emphasising Islāmic persecution, the latter denying it and indeed sometimes essaying to prove that it was the other way round. One Muslim writer, for example says 'Hindusim is not generally thought of as a missionary religion, and it is often assumed that during Muslim rule conversions were only from Hinduism to Islām. This is, however, not true. Hinduism by now (i.e. in Mughal times) very much on the offensive and was absorbing a number of Muslims'.⁷⁴ The view expressed is amazing. It could be said that there were converts from Islām to Hinduism, but it can hardly be believed that Hinduism was 'very much on the offensive' and that it was a 'missionary religion' in the sense Islām was. The writer goes on to say (1) Shāh Jahān discovered that Hindus were forcibly marrying Muslim girls and converting them to Hinduism. (2) Two Muslim nobles were converted by *vairāgīs* (wandering ascetics). (3) The Sikhs converted a large number of Muslims. Besides he quotes S.R. Sharma in support. There doesn't seem to be any real evidence in support of Shāh Jahān's discovery.⁷⁵ In fact there is proof to show that the emperor made attempts to convert Hindus both by persuasion and by force.⁷⁶ As regards the other stray conversions, *vairāgīs* could hardly be expected to use force. The Sikhs began by being on the defensive, but when their *gurūs* were killed and tortured, they did violently protest. They organised themselves into a strong force with the conviction that force could be met by force only. They may have been eager to avenge but never to interfere in another's religion. As for Professor Sharma he says nothing

74 S.M. Ikram, *Muslim Civilization in India*, ed. A.T. Embree, Columbia University Press, 1964, p. 232.

75 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, Vol. VII, 1974, p. 218 fn. S.

76 S.R. Sharma only says that Shāh Jahān discovered that the Hindus had accepted daughters of Muslim parents and converted them to their own faith, p. 106, *op. cit.* Forcible conversion is nowhere implied.

of the kind. Speaking of the forced conversions to Islām he rightfully says 'Of the converts it must be said that very few, if any, seem to have changed their faith for religious' reasons. Desire to escape civil disabilities or worse, and acquire material benefits formed the motive force in most cases. It may be argued that the religion which these converts shook off so easily must have been sitting very lightly on them. But the history of the world contains a few martyrs and a host of trimmers. Hindu India of Aurangzīb's reign was no exception. The wonder is not that so many were converted but that the vast majority of the Hindus kept their faith amidst so many temptations and such persecution'.⁷⁷

Few English writers have touched the subject, but some of those who have, appear to suffer from insufficient knowledge, at least about Hinduism. One writer says, 'Hinduism is vague and confused. Compared to the crisp outline of Koranic law the niceties of *dharma* are a fog of obscurity'.⁷⁸ Perhaps what the writer means is that Hinduism has a wider compass than Islām, and for that matter Christianity. It is more eclectic, accommodating and cosmopolitan. That is why the *Vedic* civilisation could survive in a land of Muslim and English conquest. Every religion which was brought to India was assimilated by Hinduism. Despite foreign missionary zeal and forcible conversions, Hindu religion is as vibrant as ever.

Other views expressed about the position of Islām in relation to Hinduism which appear to be unconvincing are (1) Instead of temples being demolished during the rule of bigoted emperors like Aurangzīb, they were given an impetus and built. (2) Islām was in need of greater protection under Muslim monarchs than other religions. (3) Mughals interfered little with Hindu customs.⁷⁹ (4) Hindus were given in good deal in employment on important posts. These views are not supported by facts.

77 S.R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Oxford, 1940, p. 164-5.

78 Percival Spear, *India*, University of Michigan Press, 1961, p. 97.

79 These views are expressed by S.M. Ikram in *Muslim Civilisation in India*, Columbia University Press, 1964, pp. 232 to 237.

Most of the Muslims rulers destroyed temples. The very first one, Sultān Mahmūd, made this one of his cherished objects. Shāh Jahān and Aurangzīb forbade the construction of new ones. Aurangzīb's order was as follows : 'Every temple built during the last ten or twelve years should be demolished without delay. Also do not allow the Hindus and infidels to repair their old temples. Reports of the destruction of temples should be sent to the court under the seal of the *qāzīs* and attested by pious *shaikhs*'.⁸⁰ Later on by a general order all schools and temples of Hindus were destroyed. The idea that Islām needed protection under Muslim rule is fantastic. In fact Islām was always aggressive except perhaps under Akbar. While Akbar was in favour of religious toleration, he never persecuted Islam.⁸¹ As regards interference with Hindu customs, idol worship which was one of the main marks of Hindu religious practice, was consistently suppressed by most Muslim rulers right from idol breaker, Mahmūd to the Aurangzīb, the destroyer of Hindu places of worship. Even the liberal and enlightened Muslim scholar and poet, Amīr Khusrav, could say 'Islam is triumphant, idolatry is subdued. Had not the law granted exemption from death by the payment of poll-tax, the very name of Hind, root and branch, would have been extinguished'.⁸² It cannot be denied that Hindus were taken in the services of the state and some held *mansabs* also. Nevertheless, except in Akbar's reign they were not given top posts. Even when they were, their loyalty was doubted, often without reason. For exemple when Rājā Jai Singh of Amber, governor of Mālwa conciliated the Marāthās because he found them too powerful to conquer, there was great suspicion at the Mughal court that he was 'in league with his co-religionists'. Sa 'ādat Khān was entrusted to deal with the situation. It was only when Peshwā Bājī Rāo gave a crushing defeat and arrived almost

80 *Muraqa 'āt-i-Hasan*, 202.

81 See author's *An Advanced History of India*, Ess Ess Publications, Vol. II, Akbar and S.R. Sharma, *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors*, Oxford, 1940, pp. 41-6.

82 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Hisiorians*, Trübner, Vol. III, p. 546.

at the gates of Delhi, that Jai Singh's *bona fides* were restored. About the Hindus in employ in Muslim times it is apparent that though there were Hindu *mansabdārs* also, the large majority was of Muslims.⁸³ A number of Hindus were given *mansabs* not because they were considered desirable but as a political necessity. Hindus were usually employed in routine jobs in the revenue and clerical establishments. Even here Aurangzib tried to have them replaced by Muslims, though he could not succeed because the Muslims themselves did not work of such drudgery. In fact the emperor tried his utmost to employ Muslims in place of Hindus wherever he could. In July 1703 twenty Hindu musketeers of the royal guard were dismissed just to give place to Muslims.⁸⁴ On the who positions of trust and responsibility were invariably given to Muslims.

A number of writers have given the reason for Hindus adopting Islām, the social disabilities of Shūdras who preferred conversion to oppression under the Hindu yoke. Thus it is said 'In Bengal, the Muslim missionaries found the greatest response to their message among the outcastes and depressed classes'.⁸⁵ R.C. Majumdar says 'as the rigours of the caste system weighed heavily upon the lower classes among the Hindus, they would naturally be attracted by the position of absolute religious and social equality which Islām offered to every Hindu, irrespective of class or creed, who embraced the new faith'.⁸⁶ It may be that the temptation of relinquishing their faith and adopting that of the ruling class was a factor in conversion of outcastes.

83 Of *mansabdārs* of 5000 and over the percentage given by M. Athar Ali in his book *The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb*, 1966 is Akbar 14.3; Shāh Jahān 24.5; Aurangzeb (in the earlier reign) 19.6 and later 32.9. S.R. Sharma in *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* 1940, says 'it is a safe to assert that the number of Hindus holding such ranks (*masabs* of 1,000 and above) towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign had gone down' (p. 132).

84 *News Letter*, 27 July, 1703.

85 S M. Ikram, *Muslim Civilization in India*, (ed. Embree), Columbia, 1964, p. 124.

86 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* (ed. R.C. Majumdar), Bhavan, Vol. V, p. 498.

The manners and culture of conquerors always has an overriding influence. English manners are still a strong element in Indian culture despite thirty-two years of independence. It is no wonder that the lure of Islām exercised a fascination on some minds. Besides as writers have rightfully pointed out Sūfism brought Islām nearer to India. A modern writer has said 'Islām in the Indian sub-continent has had to external challenges which could threaten its identity, the Hindu and the Western'.⁸⁷ This gives the idea that Islām was the native religion of India which faced the 'external challenges' of Hinduism and Christianity. The challenge was really to Hinduism and not to Islām. As the sea contains the rivers without changing, or the trees of the forest bend to let the storm pass over and are straight again, even so Hinduism withstood all the efforts to transform and uproot it.

Very few of the converts were so by choice. During Aurangzib's reign the slogan was '*Qanungoship* for becoming a Muslim.' Offers were openly made to chiefs of ruling families that they could retain their position only if they adopted Islām. Civil disabilities were imposed on Hindus. Those who became Muslims were exempt from slavery and from payment of the *jizyā*. Where persuasion failed, force was applied. Mahmūd's secretary Al-'Utbī frankly recorded 'Islām or death was the alternative that Mahmūd placed before the people'.⁸⁸ Ibn Batūtah says 'other nations embraced Islām only, when the Arabs used their swords against them'. Faced suddenly with such a choice many scorned a life without faith. Al-'Utbī writes: 'The blood of the infidels flowed so copiously, that the stream was discoloured, notwithstanding its purity, and people were unable to drink it.'⁸⁹ The tradition was carried on by most rulers of the Sultānate and by Mughal emperors with very few exceptions. To recount their uncompromisingly harsh measures

87 *The Legacy of Islam*, ed. J. Schacht and C.E. Bosworth, Oxford, 1979, (Ch. on India by Aziz Ahmad) p. 143.

88 S.R. Sharma, *Studies in Medieval History*, pp. 57, 61 and 29.

89 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians* Trübner, Vol. II, pp. 34 and 40.

would be mere repetition.⁹⁰ All kinds of temptations were given for conversions, all varieties of compulsion, torture and cruelty invented for it. Even then the headway made was negligible. The Muslims were a drop in the sea. Bernier says. 'The great Mogol is a foreigner in Hindustān . . . he finds himself in a hostile country, or nearly so; a country containing hundreds of Gentiles (i e. Hindus) to one Mongol or even to one Mohammedan'.⁹¹ Dr. Gemelli Careri is also of the same view. 'In India' he says, 'there is scarce a Mohammedan among fifty men'.⁹²

Instances of the horrible massacres of Hindus, their torture and bloodshed are littered about plentifully in the accounts of chroniclers. Tīmūr got 100,000 'infidels, impious idolaters, slain in one day. Writing about 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī's campaign in Gujarāt the author of *Tārīkh-i-Wassāf* says 'The Mohammedan forces began to kill and slaughter, on the right and on the left unmercifully, throughout the impure land, *for the sake of Islām*, and blood flowed in torrents'.⁹³ Ibn Batūtah describes the horrible cruelties practised by the Sultān of Ma'bar on the Hindus. One day while he was dining with the Sultān a Hindu, his wife and their seven year old child was brought before them. Then Sultān got them all immediately beheaded on the spot. On another occasion he ordered the hands and feet of a Hindu to be cut off. Ibn Batūtah could not stand the sight and left on the pretext of saying his prayers. When he returned he found the man bleeding profusely.

Not content with killing and torturing the infidels, Muslim kings and generals went all out to humiliate and insult their religion, and dishonour their women. Mahmūd began the practice. When he broke the Shiva-*linga* of the Somanātha temple, he got the fragments taken to Ghaznī and made into

90 See the author's *An Advanced History of India*, Vol. 2. Ess Ess Publications, under chapters of individual dynasties and emperors—religious policy.

91 Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, Constable, p. 209.

92 *A Voyage Round the World*, Vol. III, p. 231.

93 Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians*, Trübner, Vol. III, pp. 42-3.

steps at the gate of the Jāmi mosque so that Muslims could tread on them. His example was imitated by many of the Muslim rulers. Ibn Batūtah found near the eastern gateway of the famous Quwwat-ul-Islām mosque in Delhi 'two very big idols of copper connected together by stones. Everyone who comes in and goes out of the mosque treads over them'.

Women were the greatest sufferers in the wars, pillages and forced conversions. It was normal routine to carry away Hindu women as captives, slaves and mistresses. A Muslim conquest was never complete without sending princesses and women of the royal family to the king's harem. Giving an account of the 'Īd ceremony in Delhi, Ibn Batūtah says: 'Then enter the musicians, the first batch being the daughters of the infidel rājās . . . Hindus . . . captured in war that year. They sing and dance, and the Sultān gives them away to the amirs and a 'izza. Then come the other daughters of the infidels who sing and dance; and the Sultān gives them away to his brothers, his relations, his brother-in-law and the maliks' sons'.

Such horrors and indignities perpetrated by the Muslim ruling class on the Hindu population were bound to create a feeling of bitterness in them. Writing in 1030, 'Al-Birunī noticed how Hindus differed from Muslims in all respects and because of the raids of Mahmūd of Ghaznī 'cherish the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims.'

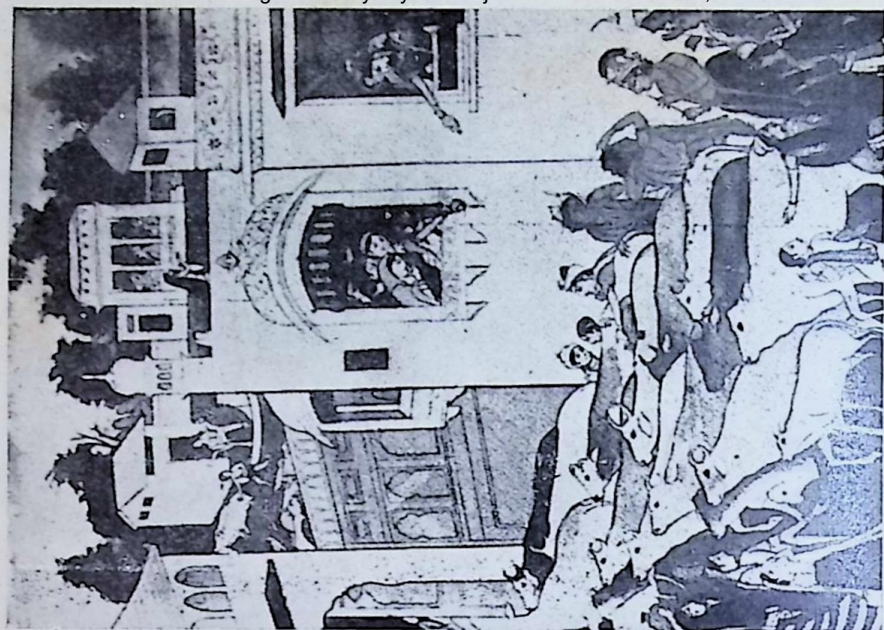
In the interaction between Islām and Hinduism, therefore, there was more hostility than friendliness.



The wives of Mathura Brahmins bringing food for Krishna



Water sport of Krishna & the Gopis



The return of the Cowherds
(Rajasthan Painting)



Krishna steals the clothes of Gopis

Religion and Philosophy

(A) SCHOOLS OF HINDUISM

Vaishnavism

At the end of the period of Hindu rule, Buddhism had acquired an ascendancy over other indigenous faiths. Soon, however, there was a revival of the Brahmanical religion. In north India the Krishṇa cult was developed. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* had already dealt with legends about the god. But now the love of Rādhā and Krishṇa began to dominate these themes. Jayadeva, a court poet of Lakshmaṇasena (twelfth century) gave a highly erotic account in *Gīta-govinda*. A more grossly sensual narration of this finds place in the *Brahma-Vaivarta Purāṇa*.

In the south Vaishṇava religion prevailed in a more elevated form. A number of saints and thinkers gave it new direction. Āchārya Nāthamunī was the founder of the school. His successor was Puṇḍarīkāksha. After him came Rāmamishra who was the *gurū* of the renowned Yāmunāchārya who may be taken as the founder of the *vishishṭādvaita* school of thought. Yāmunāchārya's celebrated disciple was Rāmānuja who began as a pupil of the *advaita* philosopher Yādava-prakāsha, but soon dissatisfied with his teachings, turned to the Ālṡars. Rāmānuja's teaching became known as qualified monism

(*vishishṭādvaita*). He refuted Shankarāchārya's concept of a formless God, and held Him to have a shape and form. The scriptural injunctions were, he believed, only the command of God. Man was a tool in God's hands. If He wanted someone to reap good He made him perform good actions. If He wished to show down someone He made him perform evil actions. Thus man was not a free agent. It was only God's grace that emancipation could be achieved. God could be known by the testimony of the scriptures, not by reason. The one God (Brahman) transformed Himself into the world and souls. These were at once with Him and yet had a real existence of their own too. Rāmānuja believed that the knower and the experiencer was separate from what is known and experienced. There could not be any state of pure revelation without an object. Knowledge could not be ever-existent as Shankarāchārya believed. The material world, Rāmānuja held, was created by the intermingling of fire, water and earth. All products were different combinations of these. He refuted Shankara's concept of *avidyā* which, the *advaita* philosopher had believed, hid the truth. Rāmānuja, thus was in complete disagreement with Shankara. He favoured the worship of God, believing Him to have a form.

After Rāmānuja's death (about 1137) his school broke up into two sects. One was known as the Vaḍakalai (the school of northern learning) and the other Teṅkalai (the school of southern learning). One of these favoured the Sanskrit scriptures like the *Vedas*, *Upanishads* and the *Gītā*, while the other relied on the *Prabandhas* (Tamil *Vedas*). Both sects agreed that self-surrender to God was essential, but while the Vaḍakalais emphasised the performance of works, the Teṅkalais believed that there was no need for self-effort, for God's love was spontaneous and automatically brought salvation to those who aspired for Him. The Teṅkalai sect were liberal and treated all castes alike. The Vaḍakalai made distinctions. In communicating the *mantra* *Om namo Nārāyaṇāya*, they omitted 'Om' when doing so to non-Brahmins.

Another school of Vaishṇavism supporting the creed of devotion was founded by Nimbārka, a Telugu Brahmin of village Nimba (identified with Nimbapura in the Bellary district).

Nimbārka preached devotion (*bhaktī*) as love. He gave prominence to the concept of Kṛishṇa surrounded by the cowherd girls, the chief of them being Rādhā. Nimbārka made a compromise between monism and dualism, his doctrine being known as *dvaitādvaita-vāda*. He regarded God as both with and without attributes. The universe was not unreal or illusory but a true manifestation of God who was the only ultimate reality. As a wave was part of the ocean and yet had a separate identity of its own, even so the universe was identical with God and also different from Him. Similarly the individual self is a part of the Supreme Self as well as different from it. This is the doctrine of identity in difference (*bhedābheda*). Even in the state of final emancipation, the soul was different as well as identical with God. It becomes endowed with God's nature, but it does not exercise any authority in the matter of creation, preservation and dissolution of the world. The Vaishṇavas of the Nimbārka school, called 'the school founded by Sanaka', draw two perpendicular lines on the forehead with a black mark in the middle. They wear a necklace and a rosary made of the Tulasī plant.

Another renowned philosopher and saint of the thirteenth century was Vāsudeva or Ānandatīrtha, popularly known as Mādhva. His followers, mostly inhabiting the Kannaḍa country, deck their foreheads with two white perpendicular lines joined by a cross on the bridge of the nose. In between they have a dark line with a red spot in the centre. On their shoulders and other limbs they inscribe prints of Viṣṇu's weapons, sometimes tattooing them with hot iron stamps. Mādhva was born after his parents had prayed and practised austerities for twelve long years, having lost their first-born son. He showed signs of piety, devotion and learning while yet a child, and in his youth became an ascetic. According to Mādhva knowledge could never exist without the knower and what was known. The universe consists of two categories. One is God who is perfect, of infinite power and excellence, omnipotent, omnipresent omniscient and unequalled. The other category consists of the dependent existences which have the means and material for working towards the goal of emancipation. These existences can broadly be classified as being of three kinds: the *daivī*

sampad—these are divine souls which are eminently qualified for liberation; the intermediate souls which are in between the divine ones and those grossly mundane; and finally the lowest class of souls which are characterised by indifference to upliftment or emancipation. Mādhva believed that devotion alone can take the soul to God. The *Maṭhara Shruti* says: 'Devotion alone leads man to the Supreme; devotion alone reveals Him; in the power of devotion is the person; devotion only is the best of means'. The other two classes of souls are also qualified for emancipation, but Mādhva gives more attention to the good soul which has the quality of purity (*sattva*) predominant, as against that of *rajas* (activity) and *tamasa* (dulness) belonging to the other two. God, according to Mādhva is not the material cause of the world. He is entirely different from the world and the individual souls. The relation between God and the souls is like that between master and servant.

The most important of Mādhva's thirty-seven treatise were his commentaries on the *Brahma-sūtra* and on the *Upanishads*. His followers, prominent among them being Jayatīrtha, wrote a number of commentories on his works.

In the Sultānate period Vaishṇavism found a number of teachers and disciples. Shrīnivāsācharya rallied round him a number of followers and popularised the creed of Rāmānuja. He instituted the upliftment of the hill tribes and gave a position of privilege to the lower classes. Among his disciples was Devarāya II, king of Vijayanagara. Another well know Vaishṇava teacher was Veṅkaṭanātha who wrote a digest of the *Smritīs* entitled *Sadāchārya-Saṅgraha*. The rival sect, the Teṅkalai became prominent under Varavara Muni who established his influence at Shrīvaṅgam. Vishṇusvāmin was another Vaishṇava teacher who was father of a Draviḍa chieftain owing allegiance to the Muslim monarch of Delhi. He was succeeded by Jñānadeva (who wrote a Marāṭhī commentary on the *Gītā*), Nāmadeva, Trilochana and Vallabhācharya.

Vallabhācharya

Vallabhācharya, who was in agreement with Vishṇusvāmin, belonged to the Telugu country, but lived for some time in

Mathurā and Vrīndāvana. He believed Kṛishṇa to be God and the highest manifestation of bliss. His body was said to consist of being, consciousness and bliss (*sat-chit-ānanda*). God's grace enables one to attain the objects of life and through excess devotion the aspirant reaches God. The followers of Vallabha worship Kṛishṇa and the cowherd maidens, the chief of them being the divine Rādhā. Adherents of the Vallabha sect paint the twelve auspicious marks on their bodies which represent the twelve forms of Viṣṇu (for example a lotus on the bosom and a bamboo leaf on the arms). They also put marks representing the various weapons of Viṣṇu on their limbs. They do not have any common temple, each *gurū* having one dedicated to him alone.

Other Vaishṇava Sects

Many followers of Mādhva also flourished in this period, of whom the most renowned was Jayatīrtha who lived in the first half of the fourteenth century. He was born in a Marāthā family. It is said he was invited to Vijayanagara by Vidyāranya. The next teacher of the Madhva school was Vidyādhīrāja. Later the school split up into many teachers, about eleven during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Vaishṇava faith spread all over northern India due to the disciples and admirers of Vallabha, Hita Harivamsha, Haridāsa Svāmī, Shribhaṭṭa and particularly Tulsīdāsa. Vallabha's son Viṭṭhalanātha organised and developed the Kṛishṇa cult and gave it a more concrete direction. Vallabha had advocated meditation on Kṛishṇa. Viṭṭhala introduced his worship eight times a day with the playing of music and offering the god the daintiest food (*prasāda*). Devotion to Rādhā was emphasised by him. 'The sweet speech of Rādhā' he says 'is dearer than salvation itself'.¹ Viṭṭhala travelled all over the country spreading his creed and making innumerable disciples. Four of his disciples and four of his father (known as the *aṣṭa-chhāpa*, from *aṣṭha*—'eight') composed and sang songs of

1 Viṭṭhalanāth, *Svāmī-stotra* and *Svāmīyāshṭaka*.

the love of Rādhā and Kṛishṇa. Of these the most prominent was the renowned poet, Sūrdāsa (1478-1581), who described the manifestation of the supreme powers of Kṛishṇa. Although Kṛishṇa sports with the cowherd youths and maidens he is the eternal Purusha, and Rādhā is his energy of infinite bliss.

Another sect was that of the Rādhā-Vallabhīs, whose founder Hita Harivamsha (1503-53) emphasised the worship of Rādhā. 'Those who are content with the love of Kṛishṇa', he said, 'do not know Rādhā'. They are satisfied by a mere drop of nectar, while neglecting the ocean of nectar, which is Rādhā.² Another Vaishṇava sect was founded by Haridāsa-svāmī, the preceptor of the renowned musician Tānsen. Akbar is said to have visited him with presents.

Worship of Rāma

The worship of Rāma was popularised by Rāmānanda, and after him by the celebrated poet and saint Tulsidāsa who wrote the *Rāmacharitamānsa* (1574). The *Manushya bhaktas* recognised God in man and were devoted to mankind in general. The Rāma cult was developed in the eighteenth century by the poet and philosopher Rāmasakhejī who wrote his *Nritya-Rāghava Milana* in 1747. The sect founded by him is the *rasika* which means 'one who does not look at anything except the beauty of Rāma and does not forget him even for a moment. When he hears the sound of a cuckoo or sees the dance of a peacock he becomes eager to meet Rāma'.³ The *rasikas* consider Rāma much in the same way as the Kṛishṇa of Kṛishṇa devotees. He dances on moonlit nights on the bank of the Sarayu river surrounded by Sītā and her girl companions. Their young devotees are known as *mañjarīs*. They serve the holy couple without expecting any reward. This view of Rāma was a complete departure from the one in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Even after his marriage with Sītā, Rāma is described as performing *Rāsa-līlā* with the maids of godly and divine beings as well as human princesses.⁴

2 Hita Harivamsa, *Rādhā-sudhā-nidhi*, verse 76.

3 *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bhavan, vol. VIII, 1977, p. 720.

4 *Brihat-Kausala Khaṇḍa*, Cantos IX to XV.

The Vaishṇava school of Bengal made even the ascetic Chaitanya a lover of women. Narahari Chakravarti composed many songs describing how he responded to the love shown to him by the married women of Navadwip.⁵ Vrīndāvana and the area round about became the centre of the school of Bengal Vaishṇavism. Priyādasjī became a follower of the Chaitanya sect. His grandson, Rasajānī Vaishṇavadāsa wrote the *Bhāgavata* in Brajabhāshā (1750).

The Kartabhajās

A new sect of the Vaishṇavas known as the Kartabhajās was founded in the district of Nadia by a recluse of the name of Āluchānd about the year 1721. The Kartabhajās had non-Brahmin *gurūs*. Pious Mussalmāns were often made heads of their centres, and devout Hindu followers would not hesitate to take the remains of their food in secret.⁶ This sect was of liberal views. They encouraged widow remarriage and were not caste-ridden. In fact a number of Shūdras were amongst the votaries of the sect. In 1819 Ward estimated the number of Kartabhajās as 20,000.⁷ A sub-sect of these were the Rāmavallabhīs who regarded Rāmavallabha as an incarnation of Shiva. They believed in Kālī, Kṛishṇa and Khudā with equal enthusiasm.⁸ Another branch of the Kartabhajās was the Sāhebdhanī sect who were against servility to a *gurū* and condemned image worship. They gathered for worship once a week and ate food cooked by all castes and communities.⁹ Another, sect, the Spastādayakas were also against slavery to a *gurū*. Their followers lived in monasteries, the women shaving their heads but retaining a small tuft of hair.¹⁰ It seems that Vaishṇavism had deteriorated in some places in the mid-eighteenth century. Rāmāprasād Sen wrote that the

5 Narahari Chakravarti, *Gaura-Charitra-chintamani*, p. 74.

6 Akshoy Kumar Datta, *Tattva-Bodhini-patrikā*, Vol. I, 195.

7 Rev. W. Ward, *A View of the Hindu Literature and Religion*, Vol. I., p. 223.

8 A.K. Datta, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-2.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 202.

10 *Birbhumī* (ed. K.P. Mallick) Chaitra, 1927.

Vaishṇavas corrupted the damsels and daughters-in-law in many households.¹¹

Shaivism

As Vaishṇavism was the creed followed by the worshippers of Viṣṇu and his incarnations, Shaivism was that of Shiva's devotees. Shaivism continued to receive royal patronage between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries in Kāshmir, Nepāl, Bengal and other places. Kshemarāja of Kāshmir wrote the *Pratyā-bhijñā-hridaya*, an important manual of the doctrine. Ratnapāla the renowned eleventh century king of Assam believed both in Shiva and Viṣṇu. Vijayasena, the founder of the Sena kingdom of Bengal was a devotee of Shiva, and so was his son Ballālasena. Govindachandra, the Gāheḍavāla king of Banaras and Kanauj, Mūlarāja I, the founder of the Chaulukya dynasty, Bhoja I of the Paramāra dynasty of Ujjain and Dhārā, the Kalachuris of Tripurī, the Chandellas of Bundelkhand, the Chālukyas, the Chōla kings and the rulers of Mysore, were all ardent Shaivites.

Although there was close rivalry between the followers of Shaivism and Vaishṇavism,¹² it could not been called a regular feature of the age, for in general even rulers adopting Shaivism, were tolerant of other faiths. Rājarāja I was favourable to Vaishṇavas even though he was a Shaiva. His sister Kundavā built both Shiva and Viṣṇu temples. A number of faiths of all kinds flourished at Kāñchi.

Vīrashaivism

Vīrashaivism or Shaivism of heroes (*vīra* = 'hero', or 'one who is powerful') became one of the most popular faiths of the Kannaḍa country. It traces its origin to five great religious teachers namely Reṇuka, Dāruka, Ghaṇṭākarna, Dhenukarna and Vishvakarna, who were believed to have incarnated in the

11 Ram Prasad Sen. *Vidyasundar*.

12 An inscription of the Tanjore district, dated 1160, mentions a resolution of a *mahāsabhā* prohibiting the association of Shaivas with Vaishṇavas.

Kali age as Revanāsiddha, Maruṣasiddha, Ekorāma, Paṇḍitārādhyā and Vishvārādhyā to expound the Vīrashaiva faith (also known as the līṅgāyat system, from 'līṅga', phallus). These teachers are said to have established five *maṭhas* (religious centres) for spreading the Līṅgāyat faith in different parts of India, namely Kedāra in the Himālayas, Ujjayinī in the south, Shrīshailam in the east, Rambhāpurī in the west and Banaras in the north. It is said that an ardent worshipper of Shiva, Ekānta Rāmāyā defeated the Jains by performing a miracle. He cut off his own head, and seven days later it was restored by the grace of Shiva and the devotee regained his life. A renowned teacher of the faith was Basava. He is said to have received a divine call to work for the revival of Vīrashaivism at Kappadi which lies at the junction of the Malaprabhā and Krishnā. He found an opportunity to spread the faith when he was appointed prime-minister of Bijjala (1156-1168). After Basava his nephew Channabasava became leader, and the Vīrashaiva movement gradually gained strength, spreading to the Andhra country and further south. Channabasava and his band of followers expounded Vīrashaivism in their collective writings known as *Vachana-shastra* which exhorts people to turn from sin and take refuge in Shiva. The Vīrashaivas recognise the sixty-three Tamil saints. The later medieval saints numbering seven hundred and seventy are also accepted by them. The sayings of these saints besides the *Vedas*, *Āgamas* and *Purāṇas* form the basis of their teachings. Other *pramāṇas* (proofs of reality) which they recognise, are perception and inference.

The Vīrashaivas believe that God and the soul are inseparably unified through the power called *shaktī*. The soul, therefore, is neither completely identical with God nor wholly different from Him. Para-Shiva is the supreme reality. He is of the nature of being consciousness and bliss (*sat-chit-ānanda*). Although the universe and all that lives in it proceeds from him, he remains unchanged. *Shaktī* is that which eternally lives in Para-Shiva and constitutes his creative power. Thus Vīrashaivism, too, is a doctrine of difference in non-difference (*bheda-bheda*). The soul's object is unity with Para-Shiva. This is the state of *līṅgāna-sāmarasya* that is union of Shiva (*līṅga*) and the

soul. The way to such emancipation is through devotion (*bhaktī*). Eight rules have to be observed by the aspirant (called *ashṭāvaraṇa*). These are: (1) obedience to a *gurū*, (2) worship of a *liṅga*, (3) reverence for the *jaṅgama* as for an incarnation of Shiva, (4) smearing of ashes made from cow-dung, (5) wearing a rosary of *rudrāksha* beads, (6) sipping water in which the feet of a *gurū* or *jaṅgama* have been bathed, (7) offering food (*prasādā*) to a *gurū*, *liṅga* or *jaṅgama* and eating the remnants and, (8) uttering the five syllabled formula *namah Shivāya*.¹³

The Vīrashaivas or Liṅgāyats do not worship in public temples. The *dīkshā* ceremony is performed among them on girls also, and women put on the *liṅga* mark too. They are in favour of widow remarriage. This liberal spirit made the faith popular, particularly in the Kannaḍa country.

Shaiva-siddhānta

Another major school of Shiva worshippers was that of the Shaiva-siddhāntas. Its principles were enunciated principally by four renowned teachers, viz., Meykaṇḍa-deva, Aruṇandi-shivāchārya, Marai-jñāna-sambandhar and Umāpati-shivāchārya. Although a number of books setting forth the doctrine were written by them, the most prominent of them were Meykaṇḍa's *Shiva-jñāna-bōdham* written in the first half of the thirteenth century and the *Shiva-jñāna-siddhiyar* of Aruṇandi-shivāchārya.

The Shaiva-siddhānta is a system of pluralistic realism, for it recognised the reality of the world as well as the ultimate plurality of the souls. The supreme reality is Shiva who is lord (*pati*) of all beings. He is superior to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra, for while these are effected by the general dissolution (*pralaya*), he is not. Although some of the writers speak of Shiva as endowed with eight qualities,¹⁴ others place no limit on his greatness. But God cannot be considered to be attributeless,

13 *The History and Culture of the Indian People* ed. R C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1957, Vol. V, p. 449.

14 viz., independence, purity, self-knowledge, omniscience, freedom from *mala* (restrictions) boundless benevolence, omnipotence and bliss.

otherwise he would be blank. Shiva is the cause of the universe. He causes the worlds to evolve so that the souls could rid themselves of their impurities. Shiva remains the same even though he causes the worlds to arise just as the sun is constant and unmoved and yet it causes the lotus flower to bloom and water to evaporate.

Shiva does not take human form like Vishṇu and the other gods, but he appears in his own form to his devotees. *Māyā* means for *siddhāntins* something different from what it implies for the *Vedāntist*. It is the stuff out of which the world is made. It is non-intelligent and so is acted upon by Shiva through his *chit-shakti*. It is so called because the world is resolved (*mā*) into it and evolved (*ya*) from it.

Jīva, or soul, is infinite and limitless, but in conjunction with its bonds (*malas*) it feels itself limited and circumscribed. One of these bonds is the aforesaid *māyā*. The other two are *āṇava* and *karma*. *Āṇava* (like the *Vedāntin's avidyā*) is beginningless, the cause of the soul's delusion and transmigration. *Karma* is works both in past existence and in the present one. Its binding force makes the soul go through the incessant cycle of births and deaths till, through the grace of Shiva, the vicious chain is broken. Although the soul is different from God it is the same in nature. There are as many souls as there are bodies. The kind of birth a soul takes is determined by the performance of works in previous existences. Human beings are superior and of them a Shaiva-siddhāntin has the greatest chance of redemption.

The means by which the soul attains emancipation are *charyā*, *kriyā*, *yōga* and *jñāna*. In the first stage (*charyā*) the soul thinks itself to be God's servant and engages in acts like cleaning temples, adorning the holy image, and so forth i.e. service of God. In the *kriyā* stage this relationship of soul and God becomes more intimate. The soul considers God to be its father. In the *yōga* stage the soul withdraws itself from the external objects and concentrates on God. The supreme end, however, *sāyūjya* or union with Shiva, can be attained by *jñāna* or wisdom. Even after release the soul continues to be a soul. It does not become God. The change is one of experience alone. While before it had knowledge through its animal and carnal

functions, now it has knowledge through God. In emancipation the soul finds godlike rest, peace and bliss but it does not share God's powers. Thus *moksha* or emancipation is a mystic union of unity-in-duality. It is not complete identity.

The Philosophy of Shrīkaṇṭha

Another philosopher of the Shaiva school was Shrīkaṇṭha who was perhaps a contemporary of Rāmānuja. He himself called his system as the Shiva-vishishtādvaita. It occupies a position midway between Shankara and Rāmānuja. Lord Shiva, he believes, is the cause of the world's creation. God creates the world and involves souls in the cycle of births and rebirths in order that the deeds of men may bear fruit. Without the fruition of deeds pure knowledge is not possible. Without the arising of the pure knowledge there cannot be liberation. It is only when by the performance of good deeds impurity and ignorance is removed, the soul becomes qualified to receive God's mercy and grace. Thus God helps only those who have first helped themselves. But Shrīkaṇṭha considers God to be the final arbiter of *karma* (works). If God wishes a person to do good deeds, He makes him do so.

The world of appearance is neither completely identical with God nor entirely different. The soul's wisdom is covered by a veil and God tries to remove the veil and transform the soul by prescribing different remedies, as a doctor does for a sick person. The souls are parts of God in a very real sense. Shrīkaṇṭha repudiates the Vedāntic view that God falsely appears as the soul through limiting conditions (*upādhis*).

Works which have ripened to the state of giving fruit in the shape of enjoyment or suffering will have their way. But the consequences of those which have not yet ripened can be avoided by meditation on Shiva. When all the impurities (*malas*) are removed liberation is achieved. The soul can then have all the blissful experiences and powers, except the power of creation. The soul can remain bodiless or create any spiritual body for itself. It is free, and in tune with Shiva. It no longer seeks anything and views the whole world as of the

nature of God. It has no longer to return to the world of tears and sorrows.

Kāpālas and Kālāmukhas

These were two different sects who depicted by their crude and coarse beliefs the degeneration of Shaivism. The Kāpālās believed that the highest bliss could be obtained by concentrating one's mind on the soul seated on the female organ. They thought drinking wine could confer great virtues and occult powers. They ate all kinds of disgusting things, and practised *yoga* not for achieving emancipation but for securing miraculous powers. They also performed human sacrifices. The Kālāmukhas were equally bad. They ate the ashes of the dead and smeared their bodies with them. They worshipped God as seated in a pot of wine or holding a club. These sects worshipped Bhairava, whose wife Chāṇḍikā wore a garland of human skulls. They made offerings of wine and human victims. The Kāpālas and Kālāmukhas had a fairly large following, and at one time even the renowned Shankara had to contend with them.¹⁵

Shaivism in the Vijayanagara Kingdom

Shaivism received the patronage of the kings of Vijayanagara in the Sultānate period. The early kings were eager Shaivites and worshipped Virūpaksha, their patron diety. Harihara I and Bukka I were disciples of Kāshīvilāsa Kriyāshakti a Pāshupata teacher. Immadi Bukka, son of Harihara, made a grant to the temple of Vidyāshaṅkara. Narasiṃha, though a Vaishṇava, observed the Shivarātri festival and made a grant on that day in 1466. The powerful Krishnadeva favoured both Shaivism and Vaishṇavism. He was in fact tolerant of all faiths. Duarte Barbosa says 'The king allows such freedom that every man may go and live according to his own creed without suffering any annoyance, and without enquiry whether he is a Christian, Jew, Moor or Heathen'. On the top of the red slab put up by him at Virūpaksha's

15 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 272.

shrine Krishṇadeva cut out a *liṅga* and the bull besides the usual sun and crescent. There were a number of Shaiva poets at his court. Virashaivism continued to spread in the Sultānate period. Shrīpati Paṇḍitāchārya wrote a commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra* from the Vīrashaiva viewpoint. Guru-Basava was a great exponent of the Vīrashaiva doctrine. Siddheshvara (about 1470) was another writer. Among Tamil poets Arunagiri and Kālamekam were enthusiastic Shaivas.

Shaivism in Mughal Times

Although there were no new developments in the Mughal period, Shaivism continued to flourish vigorously, and had a large following. Appayya Dīkshita (1520-92) was a prominent scholar who tried to reconcile the monism of the *Vedānta* and *Āgama* philosophy with Shaivism. His doctrine, the *ratna-traya-parīkshā* seeks to establish the identity of Shaṅkara-Pārvatī and Shaṅkara-Nārāyaṇa concepts. Another eminent Shaiva saint was Tiruchirappalli who was offered the kingdom as well as the hand of a widowed queen in marriage, but declined and went off on a spiritual quest. Līṅgāyata saints composed hymns and treatise. Some of the Shaivas of the seventeenth century laid down even their lives for their faith. Annoyed by an act of Krishṇappā Nāyaka of Gingee a group of Shaiva priests jumped from the high tower of a shrine and died. The Nāyaka got enraged at their self-immolation and killed those who were left behind. Seeing this a woman Shaiva cut her own throat.¹⁶

In Bengal Shaivism showed some degeneration. In *Shivāyana*, Rāmeshvara narrates how Shiva went for begging alms in a Koch village. When the young Koch girls heard the sound of his bugle they came out and were seduced by the god. Rājā Prithvichandra of Pakur mentions in his *Gaurī-maṅgala* (1806) Shiva's dalliance with the Koch women.

16 Purchas, *Pilgrims*, X, pp. 208-9.

Other Medieval Hindu Sects and Cults

1000-1300— The other systems of Hindu philosophy like *Yoga*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Nyāya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* continued, but there were no valuable contributions to them. Vijñānabhikṣu tried to give *Sāṅkhya* a new orientation, but he came much later near about the sixteenth century. *Yoga* became more popular as an instrument for body building and possible acquisition of occult powers than a means of spiritual discipline. *Sāṅkhya* provided inspiration to cults like those of Kṛishṇa and Rādhā and of Hara and Gaurī. Shivāditya wrote on *Vaisheshika*, *Nyāya* received new dimensions, and Gaṅgesha of Mithilā put new life into it by making it sharp enough to wrest with the Jain and the Buddhist logic which were gaining ground. On the other hand by placing too much emphasis on its epistemology its metaphysical aspect was neglected. The *pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* continued to have some importance because of its relation to the *Vedas*, but with the disappearance of the *Vedic* sacrifices its influence was not the same as before. The Hindu philosophers of the age sought to reconcile the divergent elements in various schools of philosophy in order to meet the challenge of new religions like Buddhism and Islām. The sheer gusto and joy in living which characterised the *Vedas* was transformed into a philosophy which tried to take account of the inevitable suffering of existence and the ways in which it could be overcome. But it would be a mistake to think as some writers of the west do, that Hindu philosophy is pessimistic. It only took account of suffering as an element of human life, it did not glorify or gloat over it. In attempting to find a way out of such suffering its attitude was intensely practical rather than dismal or pessimistic.

In the Sultānate Period

The most marked religious development under the Sultāns was the appearance of a number of sages and devotees who were bound by a common creed, namely *bhaktī* (devotion). The *Upanishads* had emphasised it when they said 'The Self cannot be realised by a study of the *Vedas*, nor by intelligence,

nor by deep learning. It can be realised by him only whom it chooses or favours.¹⁷ *Bhaktī* was defined by Nārada as intense love of God. The devotee turns to God alone and completely surrenders himself to Him. No other desire remains save the desire for God. Knowledge and action are subservient to God's service which is their sole end. The path of devotion is open to all, for God makes no discrimination between one person and another. It is the easiest and the best way to reach God. One-pointed devotion to God can make a sinner a saint, as Lord Krishṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. 'Even if a person of the vilest conduct worships me with undivided devotion, he should be regarded as a saint'.¹⁸

The saints and mystics of this period were not affiliated to any particular sect. They were free from all rituals and dogmas. Most of them did not favour idol worship, but believed in one God. They would have subscribed to the view of the *Rig Veda*, *ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti* ('That which is one the sages know by different names'). Although they believed in the efficacy of a *gurū*, final emancipation was only possible by God's grace.

Some writers are of the view that the *bhaktī* creed of India was the direct or indirect result of the impact of Islām. One of them says that medieval Hindu mysticism 'must have acquired knowledge of Islāmic ideas, and perhaps was unconsciously inspired by them'.¹⁹ 'The *bhaktī* movement' he says 'represents the first effective impingement of Hindu society on Islām'.²⁰ It can't be denied that Sūfism and the *bhaktī* movement had much in common.²¹ Both believed in physical exercises such as restraining the breath. Service of the *gurū* or *pīr* and submission to him, chanting of sacred words, toleration of other faiths, belief in union with the supreme being through love and devotion, were other beliefs shared by the two schools. But it seems rather far-fetched to say that one was the outcome of the

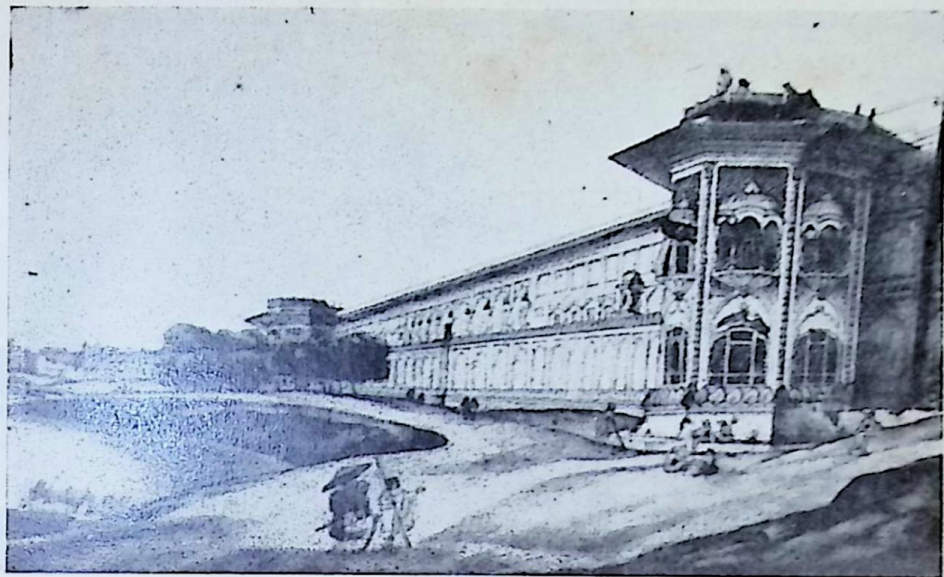
17 *Kaṭha Upa.*, ii: 23; *Muṇḍaka Upa.*, iii: 2: 3.

18 *Gītā*, IX :30.

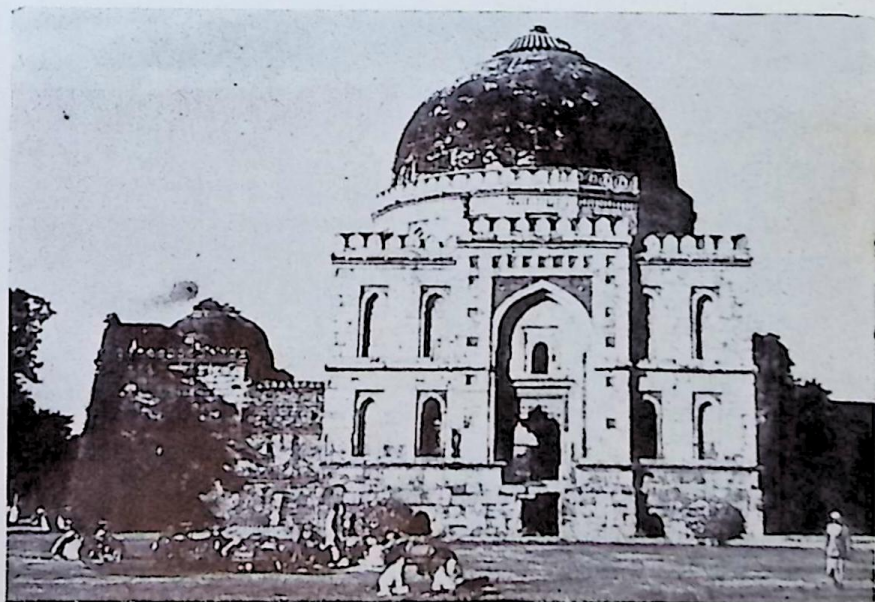
19 Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (1957), p. 13.

20 *Ibid*, p. 31.

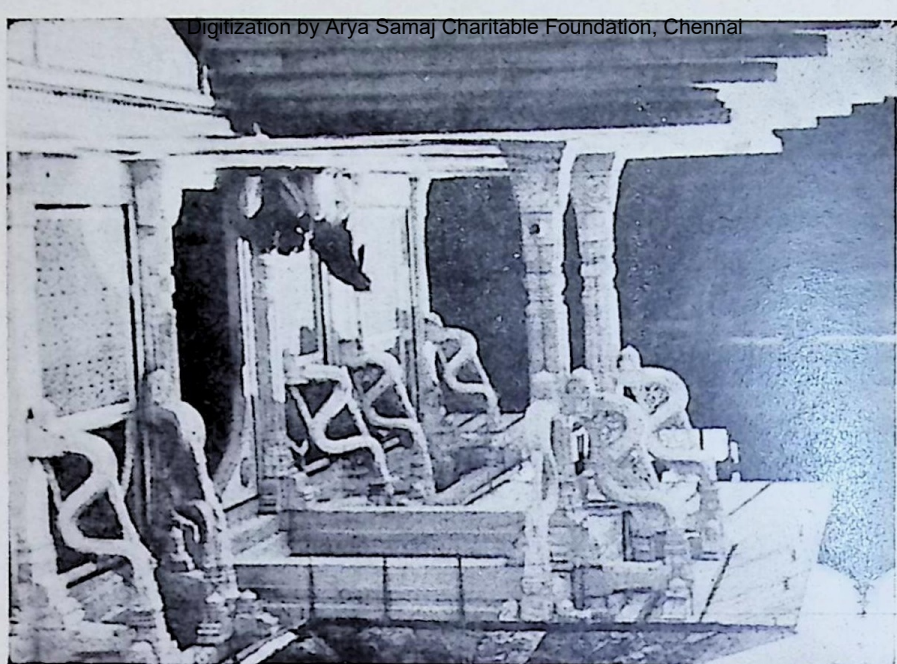
21 The creed of the Sūfis will be dealt with under the head 'Islām'.



Qudsiya-Bagh, Delhi



Bara-Gumbad, Lodi Gardens, Delhi



Porch of Tomb of Shaik Salim Chisti



other. Two persons may arrive at the same conclusion on their own. The mystic, in fact, crosses barriers of sect and race. To him the ecstatic union with God is the only religion. Nor was there any indirect influence of Islām on the mystics of the *bhaktī* cult. *The Cultural Heritage of India* for example holds the view that Islām was a serious challenge to Hinduism, and 'it inspired the religious men of India to seek more earnestly for the truths of their own faith'.²² Islām was never a challenge to Hinduism. The two faiths were entirely different and poles apart. Sūfism could be considered to be a brief meeting point, but it was never accepted by orthodox Islām itself. The Sūfīs held views which might almost be considered heresy by a strict Muslim. A Persian mystic, Abū Sa'īd ibn Abī'I Khair wrote:

Not until every mosque beneath the sun
Is ruined will our holy work be done,
And never will true Muslim appear,
Till faith and infidelity are one.

Al-Wāsitī said 'Ritual acts are only impurities'. 'I am the Truth' said al-Hallāj. 'Is it Thou or is it I?' Abū Yazīd al-Bistāmī exclaimed, 'Praise be to Me!' Orthodox Hinduism was equally unaffected by the mystic saints of the *bhaktī* cult. These saints lived exclusive and unconventional lives and their influence was limited and shortlived. Sufism and the *bhaktī* movement can be likened to two railway lines which meet at one point, and then go their own ways. All attempts to bridge Hinduism and Islām ended in failure. A brief review may now be made of the Hindu mystic saints of the period.

Rāmānanda who belongs to the 15th-16th, century, was a Vaishṇava Brahmin whose teacher was Rāghavānanda. He studied the *viśiṣṭādvaita* system of Rāmānuja at Vārāṇasī. Soon, however, he ceased to be an orthodox Vaishṇava and founded a new school of Vaishṇavism based on the principle of love. He admitted members of the low castes. Among his disciples were a weaver, a barber and a cobbler. He used the vernacular instead of Sanskrit for his preaching. Another

22 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. II, p. 249.

change made by Rāmānanda was that instead of the Rādhā and Krishṇa cult worship he introduced the worship of Rāma and Sītā. He has left us a single poem embodied in the *Granth Sāhib*, but even this is enough to show the high reaches of his thought: 'Where shall I go?' The music and festivity are in my own house, my heart does not wish to move, my mind has folded its wing and is still. One day my heart was filled to overflowing, and I had an inclination to go with sandal and other perfumes to offer my worship to Brahman. But the *gurū* revealed that Brahman was in my own heart. Wherever I go I see only water and stones worshipped; but it is Thou who hast filled them with Thine presence. They all seek Thee in vain among the *Vedas*. If Thou art not to be found here, we must go and seek Thee there. My own true *gurū*, Thou hast put an end to all my failures and illusions. Blessed art Thou! Rāmānanda is lost in his master, Brahman; it is the word of the *gurū* that destroys all the million bonds of action.'²³

Ravidās, a cobbler by birth, was the worshipper of the one infinite God. He believed that God cannot be known by the performance or rites and ceremonies, but only through intense love. Jhālī, queen of Chitor received her initiation through him. Mīrā Bāi was another mystic saint who gave up the world and immersed herself in Krishṇa love.

The most famous disciple of Rāmānanda was Kabīr. All that we know with certainty about him is that he was brought up by a Muslim weaver. According to one legend he was the illegitimate son of a Brahmin widow whom she abandoned. The child was found by the weaver's wife and brought up in the family. According to another account, however, he was really the son of a Muslim weaver.

Kabīr was a contemporary of Sikandar Lodhī. According to a legend Kabīr would lie down on the steps of the bathing *ghāt* where Rāmānanda, a sage of his times, took his bath daily. Once the sage stepped on him by accident, and exclaimed 'Rama! Rama!' Kabīr took this as the *mantra* of initiation, and learning of the incident, Rāmānanda accepted him as his disciple.

Kabīr did not favour ascetism or mortification of the flesh. He married and had two children. Although he had numerous disciples he continued his profession of a weaver.

Caste distinctions made no headway with Kabīr, and he considered Hindus and Muslims alike. He preferred devotion to knowledge, particularly favouring the chanting of Rāma's name.

'Says Kabīr: Listen my brothers
No one has obtained salvation
Except through God's holy name'.

Religion, without devotion (*bhaktī*) was valueless to Kabīr. God's grace was more to be prized than mere reading of the scriptures:

'The images are all lifeless, they cannot speak:
I know, for I have cried aloud to them.
The *Purāna* and the *Qurān* are mere words:
Lifting up the curtain, I have seen.'

Kabīr's verses have been collected in the *Bijaka*. The language used by him is Hindi with a smattering of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words too. There are also his 'message poems', the *Bāṇīs*.

There were other disciples of Rāmānanda also whose number is traditionally believed to be twelve. Prominent among these were Anantānanda who founded a sect of his own, Sadnā, a butcher, two of whose songs are included in the *Granth Sāhib*, and Ravidāsa, a cobbler who was the preceptor of Jhālī and Mīrābāī, two queens of Chitor.

One of the greatest mystic saints of India was Chaitanya (also known as Krishṇa-Chaitanya, Vishvambhara and Nimāi). His career as a mystic started when he was initiated by a recluse of the name of Īshvarapurī who gave him Krishṇa-mantra. Henceforth he would fall into trances, rave laugh and weep. A new kind of devotional singing called *kīrtana* was initiated by him in which the names of Hari and Krishṇa were sung in chorus. Huge *kīrtana* parties went about the streets of Navadvīpa with Chaitanya and his followers, singing and dancing in fits of

ecstasy, so much so that the Muslim governor prohibited their activity. But Chaitanya defied the ban by passive resistance, and managed to have his way. The saint took up his abode at Purī and from there went all over India. With the help of two highly placed Hindu officials and the Muslim ruler of Bengal (all of whom became his disciples), the holy centre of Vrindāvan which had been neglected, was restored to its former glory. During the last twelve years of his life Chaitanya was largely in the state of *premonmāda* or madness of divine love.

Chaitanya emphasised the Rādhā-Krishṇa cult and as such was the precursor of the Hare-Krishṇa movement which has spread in our days to foreign lands of the west, particularly America. Love of God was, according to him, the only way to salvation. This was purely spiritual love. Any kind of social intercourse with women was prohibited to his followers. Once he refused to see a favourite disciple of his merely because he had talked to an old Vaishṇava woman whose piety and virtue were well known. Like Kabīr, Chaitanya gave no importance to caste or community and one of his prominent disciples was a Muslim. Several sects, following Chaitanya's doctrines, came into existence after him and flourish even today, particularly in Bengal. His followers mark their foreheads with two white perpendicular lines joined together at the bridge of the nose along with a line continued to the tip of the nose. They also wear a necklace of three strings of *tulasī* beads and a rosary of the same material.

Another great luminary among the medieval mystics was Nānak, an elderly contemporary of Chaitanya. He was born in 1464 in a Khattrī family. His parents wanted him to take up a job, but he preferred to leave his home and become a mendicant. Nānak emphasised purity of character and conduct rather than rituals. He believed in one God and denounced image worship. He made no distinction of caste, creed, or nationality. 'At God's gate' he said, 'there dwell thousands of Muhammads, thousands of Brahmās, of Vishṇus, of Shivas; thousands upon thousands of exalted Rāmas. There is one Lord over all spiritual lords, the creator whose name is true.'²⁴ Like

Chaitanya, he too travelled all over India, and even to Ceylon, singing hymns to the accompaniment of the *rebek*²⁵ played by Mardānā his faithful attendant. Nānak acknowledged Kabīr as his spritual guide. His hymns have been preserved in the *Ādī-Grantha*.

In the Mughal Period

(a) *Hinduism in Relation to Shūdras*

Hinduism faced a challenge in the Mughal period inasmuch as the liberal attitude towards Shūdras was in favour of giving them more religious privileges but the orthodox Brahmins were inclined to resist their admission. So was it with those Muslims, who, influenced by the *bhaktī* movement, preferred to embrace Hinduism. The case for admitting lower caste devotees to the Hindu fold was taken up by the Teṅgalais (as against the Vaḍagalais who represented orthodox Hinduism). Their exponent was Gopāla Bhaṭṭa a south Indian follower of Chaitanya. He quoted scriptural authorities to prove that women and Shūdras were entitled to worship Shiva. Sanātana Gosvāmin also supported this view. Some of the non-Brahmin followers of Chaitanya became the *gurūs* of Brahmins, as for example Naraharī Sarkār of Shrikhaṇḍa who belonged to the Vaidya caste, Narottama Ṭhākur, who was a Kāyastha the Mahārashṭra saint Tukārām who was a Shūdra, and Shandardeva and his principal disciple Mādhvadeva who were Kāyasthas. On the other hand many of the Brahmin disciples of Mādhvadeva opposed this trend. They became known as Bāmuniā Gosāins. Tulsīdāsa painted Shūdras in a lurid light, ranking women and Shūdras with boors and beasts.²⁶ He sarcastically remarks that Shūdras presume to perform fasts and penances, and to teach the *Purāṇas* from an exalted position.²⁷ Kamlākara Bhaṭṭa, who belonged to Mahārashṭra, denied the right of reading the *Purāṇas* to the Shūdras. He thought they should be

25 A stringed musical instrument.

26 *Sundar kāṇḍa*, 58.3.

27 *Uttara kāṇḍa*.

allowed to utter just one Rāma and one Shiva *mantra*. Raghunandana of Nadiā, a renowned writer on Dharmashāstra, was a strong champion for Brahmins whom he considered to be the only twice-born caste. All others were classified by him as Shūdras. Other writers like Keshava Paṇḍit and Anantadeva, however, recognised other castes, the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas also. Shivājī called himself a Kshatriya and acknowledges the Vaishya caste also.

(b) *The Tantras*

We have seen that the Tāntriks had debased religion by immoral practices and rites. An attempt was made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to rescue it from the mire by spiritualising the cult. The *Kāmākhyā Tantra* classed the Tāntriks under three groups—the *divya* who were calm, fearless, truthful, even-minded and loved by all people; the *vīra* who were full of strength, vigour, courage and enterprise; lastly the lowest class, the *pashu*, who were enslaved by six passions, viz. lust, rage, greed, vanity, envy and illusion. The significance of the five M's (*pañchamakāra*) is explained metaphorically by the *Kulārṇava Tantra*: 'The wine which gladdens is the nectar which flows from the union of the *kuṇḍalīnī shakti* with Shiva at the *sahasrāra* in the head. And he who drinks this, drinks nectar, and others are mere winebibbers. The man who kills by the sword of *jñāna* is said to be a true eater of flesh. That man is truly a fish-eater who controls all his senses and places them in the *ātman*; others are mere killers of animals. The *shakti* of the *pashu* (the lowest class of *aspirant*) is not awakened, but the *kaulika* is. The man who enjoys this *shakti* is said to be a *shakti*-enjoyer. He is permeated by the bliss which arises out of the union of the Supreme *shakti* and the *ātman*—which is the true union; others are no better than fornicators'.²⁸ Muslim Fānī, a Muslim observer, mentions a class of Shāktas who never drink wine and never indulge in adultery.

A number of philosophers and writers developed the Tantra literature. Mahīdhara wrote the *Mantra-mahodadhi* (1589), and

²⁸ *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Calcutta, Vol. 2, p. 203.

Brahmānanda Giri the *Shaktānanda-taraṅginī* and *Tārā-rahasya*. Puṇananda wrote much on Tantra. Shankara of Gauḍa wrote *Tārā-rahasyavarṭtika* which describes the worship of Tārā. Krishṇānanda Āgamavāgiśha of Navadvīpa's work *Tāntrasāra* was revered not only in Bengal but in the whole of north India. Another Bengali writer on the Tantras was Raghunātha Takavāgiśha whose work is known as the *Āgama-tattvavilāsa*.

Despite these efforts on the part of scholars to reform the Tāntric practices, many votaries kept of the path of sensual enjoyment and debauchery under the garb of religion. The horrible rites of the Aghorepanthīs continued right till the seventeenth centuries and are mentioned in the *Dabīstān*.

(c) *The Bhaktī movement in the West*

The *bhaktī* movement initiated by Jñāneshvara in the western part of India found distinguished exponents in Eknātha. Tukārām, Dādū and Rāmdās. Jñāneshvara or Jñānadeva is reported to have performed many miracles, one of which was the cure of Sachchidānanda Bābā, a native of Nevase, who was on his death-bed. The man became his devout disciple and wrote the *Jñāneshvarī*, a commentary on the *Gītā* at the sage's dictation. Jñānadeva's *Jñāneshvarī* gathered great fame and is reckoned amongst the world's best mystical compositions. Other important works of his are the *Abhaṅgas* (lyrical poems), *Amṛitānubhava* and *Chāṅgadevaprashatī*.

Nāmadeva, another sage, surprisingly started as a robber who once killed eighty soldiers at a time. Moved by the piercing cries of the wife of one of his victims, he tried to commit suicide, but was saved by the revelation of God. He wrote lyrical verses, some of which are included in the *Granth Sāhib*. His creed is devotion, through which alone, he believed, God could be realised.

Eknātha observed no distinction of caste and creed, and glorified *Kali* age which provides opportunity to all to attain salvation by merely chanting the name of Hari. He once gave to the pariahs the food prepared as an offering to his forefathers. He wrote a commentary on the eleventh book of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*,

composed the twenty-six *abhaṅgas* called *Haripāḥ* and expounded the *Chatuṣṣhlokī Bhāgavata* in 1036 verses.

Tukārāma, born in a Shūdra family was a great devotee of Rāma, performed *kīrtana* and sang devotional songs composed by himself in the *Abhaṅga* metre. His teaching too was that God could be realised by devotion alone. His hymns bear a striking resemblance to those of Chaitanya.

A cotton-cleaner of Ahmadābād of the name of Dādū, who lived at the end of Akbar's reign, founded a new sect of Rāma worshippers. His followers were of three classes—the ascetics (*viraktas*), the bearer of arms who took up service with princes (*nāgās*), and ordinary householders (*vistaradhārins*). Dādū stressed devotion to Rāma beyond whom nothing existed. In one of his hymns he says

We are not, we are not. Rāma, the Truth, is all.
Earth and heaven are not, air and light are not.
Sun moon and stars are not, nor the consuming fire.
The five elements are not, the whole world is not.
Our bodies and souls are not, nor yet the beholder of this play.
There is neither tree nor shadow, neither bird nor landscape.
Neither dweller on the mountains, nor inhabitant of the ocean.
Sea and dry land are not, the entire universe is not.
Beginning and end are not. Rāma alone abides.²⁹

Rāmdās (1608-81) another Rāma worshipper, set up as many as eleven hundred *maṭhs* (religious centres) with temples attached to them. Some of these exist even now. He also travelled a lot to spread his faith. His main work is known as the *Dāsabodh*. Among his disciples was the celebrated Marāthā leader, Shivājī. Rāmdās believed in character building. He advocated kindness, temperateness and devotion.

The Vallabhāchārya sect became prominent in Gujarāt, particularly among rich traders and cultivators. Gopāldās, who was a disciple of Viṭṭhāl-nāth wrote the *Vallabhākhyāna* incorporating the views of the sect. This work, in the Gujrātī language became very popular, and many commentaries were written on it.

29 W.G. Orr, *A Sixteenth Century Indian Mystic*.

The Dāsas of South India

In south India the Dāsakūṭa or Dāsa poets were originated by Srīpadarāya, who introduced service in temples in the Kannaḍa language instead of Sanskrit. These devotional poets were inspired by Mādhva and Chaitanya. The Dāsa poets popularised worship at many prominent temples and places of pilgrimage, like Udupi, Shrīrangam and Tirupati.³⁰ Their greatest exponent was Purandara (1480-1564). He was the originator of Karnāṭaka devotional music and wrote more than two thousand songs. He preached complete dependence on God and abandonment of egotism. Another poet, Kanakadās was born in a Kurub family, a caste of hunters. As he was a non-Brahmin he had to put up with a great deal of opposition. The Dāsas used to go from place to place singing devotional songs. They were able to influence the people by their pious and saintly lives.

Liberalism in Hindu Religion

One of the results of the impact of Islām was the liberal attitude taken by Hindu religious leaders, particularly the Vaishṇavas, towards Muslims who were inclined towards Hinduism. Among the converts of Chaitanya figured the famous Muslim saint Haridās, and also some Paṭhāns led by Bijuli Khān. Muhsin Fānī mentions in *Dabistān-ul-Majāhab* that Muslims were freely admitted among the Vairāgīs, and gives a few names also, as for example, Mirza Saleh and Mirza Haidar. Dārā Shukoh translated fifty-two *Upanishads* into Persian and while writing an Introduction to his work, mentioned that the difficult passages in them were explained to him by *paṇḍits* and ascetics of Banaras. Many scholars compiled texts to bring together adherents of the two faiths. Dādū founded the Pārābrahma Sampradāya for this. Bābā Lāl a Kshatriya of Mālwa talked about religion to Dārā Shukoh and their conversation is recorded in *Nadu un mīkat* a Persian work. Prānnāth a Hindu saint quoted in his work *Mahitariyal* parallel texts from the *Qurān* and the *Vedas* to prove similarity in the two scriptures.

30 Tirupati is mentioned by Manucci in *Storia do Mogor*, II, p. 468.

New sects came up. One was led by a saint, Sadhanā, who was a butcher. Two of his songs find place in the *Granth Sāhib*. Meo, a robber tribe of Rājasthān formed the sect known as Lāldāsīs who abandoned rituals and stressed devotion. Often these sects disagreed with each other, and even fought openly.

Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century

Increase in ritual worship was the characteristic of Hindu religion in this period. There were bitter quarrels among various sects, like those of the Teṅkalais and Vaḍakalais both followers of Rāmānuja. In a free fight between the Nāgās and the Vaishṇava Bairāgīs, as many as eighteen thousand of the latter sect were killed. The *peshwās*, however, were tolerant towards all religious sects.

The age was one of superstition. Aboriginal godlings were worshipped in the villages, and even spirits and ghosts. The lower strata of society in Bengal and Bihār worshipped, for example, Kāloo Rāi the patron of tigers, Rāma Thākur, a ghost, and Mālik Bāyo a Muslim conqueror.

Nevertheless Hindu religion was kept alive by many adherents of the schools of *bhaktī* and the cult of Rāma worship. A number of biographies of saints were written. Priyādāsī, Narahari Chakravarti (*Bhaktiratnākara* and *Narottamavilāsa*) and Mahīpati (*Bhaktavijaya* and *Bhaktalīlāmṛta*) were the main writers.

In Gujarāt the Shaktī cult was developed. Three new sects also came into being. The first was of the Rāmasanehīs founded by Sādhu Shaṅtidās which enforced strict moral discipline. The second sect, founded by Mādhvagar, forsook image worship, and homage to *gurūs*. They condemned caste distinctions. The third sect was founded by Swāmī Nārāyan (1781-1830). They were against bloody sacrifices, infanticide and *satī*. They gave up meat and intoxicants, prohibited immoral practices, and desisted from killing any living creature, though they did not favour widow remarriage and excluded women from those entitled to give religious instruction.

In other places, too, new sects arose. Charaṇadās of Alwar

stressed purity of character. His sect worshipped Rādhā and Kṛishṇa and were concentrated mainly in Delhi and the upper Doāb. His followers wore yellow garments and a small pointed cap round the lower part of which they wrapped a yellow turban. The Paṭudāsīs, who were followers of Paṭudās were centred in Ayodhyā. They were against image worship.

(B) NON-HINDU RELIGIONS

The religions which, apart from Hinduism, had a following in India in the medieval period, were Buddhism, Jainism and Islām. The general tenets of the first two have already been discussed.³¹ Only those development have been given here which took place in the period under review.

Buddhism

Before his death the Buddha had clearly said that *dhamma* was independent of the teacher. It meant 'that which carries'. Once the flame of the teaching is lit it burns of itself. To his favourite disciple, Ānanda, the Buddha said 'With the Accomplished One, Ānanda, there is nothing like the closed fist of a teacher'. He had declared that the doctrine is to be understood by the wise, each for himself—*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*. To Ānanda he had said 'Be ye lights to yourselves, be ye a refuge to yourselves; seek not for refuge in others. Let the doctrine be your light, let the doctrine be your refuge; seek not refuge with others.'³²

After Buddha's death, however the creed he had taught underwent a change. It became influenced by Tāntrism, the concept of *shūnyatā* or perfect knowledge, and the idea of *karuṇā* or universal compassion. While the founder of Buddhism had depended solely on the doctrine, his followers began to favour the spread of the creed through preaching and missionary activity. The two new elements (*karuṇā* and *shūnyatā*) led to

31 See the author's *A History of Indian Civilisation*, Vol. I, Ess Ess Publications, 1979, pp. 126-33 (Buddhism); pp. 133-5 (Jainism).

32 *Parinibbāna Suttanta* (*Dīghya Nikāya* II, p. 100).

the idea of *Bodhisattva* which replaced the old concept of the *Arhat*. 'A *Bodhisattva* is a being compounded of the two contrary forces of wisdom and compassion. In his wisdom he sees no persons; in his compassion he is resolved to save them.'³³ This new line of thinking came to be known as *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. It was a doctrine of faith and devotion as against the *Hinyāna* school which was based on reason and wisdom. The *bhakti* movement gave it a great impetus, and like it *Mahāyāna* Buddhism was addressed to the common man. Buddhas began to be regarded as supernatural beings. There was also a tendency to habitual worship of images and elaboration of ritual. Salvation, it was believed, could be obtained by faith in a Buddha, usually in the form of *Amitābha* and by invocation of his name. Every person is a potential Buddha and has within him the possibility of becoming an Enlightened One. This popular form of Buddhism began to rely on *mantras* (power charged words) and so became esoteric. This was the beginning of *Tāntrik* Buddhism.

The idea of *śhūnyatā* (also known as *prajñā*) became gradually allied with the female principle and *karuṇā* (or *upāya*) with the male. The union of the two represented truth, and this union was known as the state of *yuganaddha*. *Tāntrik* Buddhism believed that enlightenment cannot be attained by mortification of the body, but by enjoyment. All esoteric *sādhana* must be performed by the male and female together. *Prajñā* thus became represented by the goddess *Bhagavatī*, or by a *Vajra-kanyā* (young girl), or even by the female organ. The *yogic* union of the *prajñā* and the *upāya* was believed to lead to supreme bliss (*mahā-sukh*) which came to be identified with *nirvāṇa*. The blissful state of the mind was elaborated by identifying different philosophical concepts with the nerve centres of the body (*chakras*). The practice of *Tāntrik* Buddhism took three distinct forms—*vajra-yāna*, *kālachakra-yāna* and *sahaaja-yāna*.

In *vajra-yāna* the votary considers everything as *vajra* (void of nature), and it prescribes a system of meditation on this supposition. It lays stress on *yogic* practices but at the same times enjoins worship of various gods and goddesses of the Buddhist

33 Edward Conze, *Buddhism*.

pantheon. *Vajra-yāna* identifies the ultimate reality with the concept of the supreme lord (*Bhagavān*) as *Vajrasattva* or *Vajradhara*. *Vajrasattva* is often identified with *Bodhi-chitta*. This is the realisation that all existence is nothing but pure knowledge.

The distinctive feature of *kālachakra-yāna* is the worship of a number of gods and their female energies having awful and terrible aspects, and fiendesses known as *Ḍākinīs*. These have to be appeased with charms offerings and sacrifices. Another concept is that Time (*Kāla*) with all its units of days, hours, months etc., dwells within the body. These are caused by the production of vital winds (*vāyus*) which are diffused throughout the nervous system. By controlling them through *yogic* practices one can keep above the influence of Time, which is the root cause of all miseries and decay.

*Sahaja-yāna*³⁴ which was prevalent mostly in Bengal, revolted against all convention and ceremony. Truth was, to its followers, a matter of intuition and could never be attained by worship, learning and such means. This was possible by sex sublimation reached through *yogic* practices. The followers of this school emphasised (i) the need of making the body fit for *yoga* and, (ii) the concept of an internal female force in the navel region corresponding to the *kula-kunḍalinī shakti* of Tantra.

Buddhism flourished in Bengal, Bihar, Kāshmir, Madhyadesha (particularly Kaushāmbī Sārnāth, and Kapilavastu) and to a modified extent in south India. But towards the end of the thirteenth century Abu-'I-Fazl says that 'for a long time past scarce any trace of them (the Buddhists) has existed in Hindustān'.³⁵ Although on the decline in the land of its birth, it had a large following abroad and found refuge in Nepāl in north India.

Jainism

Jainism flourished greatly in India in the period 1000 to 1300, and found many distinguished adherents in the Deccan, south

34 *Sahaja* means 'straight' or 'natural'.

35 'Āin-i-Akbarī, III, 1894, p. 212 (trans. Jarrett).

India and Gujarāt.

In Gujarāt the Chaulukya kings were patrons of the religion. The *prashasti* speaks of Sahasrakīrti as 'the sinless teacher whose supreme lotus feet were worshipped by eminent kings like the Gāṅgeya, Bhojadeva and others'.

Jainism became dominant in the time of the Chaulukya rulers Siddharāja and his successor Kumārapāla, the latter even adopted it as his own faith. Hemachandra made Gujarāt a stronghold of Jainism. He gave high place to the Jain principle of non-violence and toleration. A number of Jain temples and shrines were built. Tejahpāla, a minister of the Chaulukya king Somasimhadeva built the Neminātha temple. The Chintāmaṇi Pārshvanātha temple at Cambay was built in 1108. There were numerous other Jain temples and shrines which were built by enthusiastic Jain devotees.

The Chālukyas and the Hoysalas who had become prominent in the south of India were great patrons of Jainism. A Jain saint, Vardhamānadeva had great influence in court. Viṣṇuvardhana the renowned Hoysala monarch was well inclined towards Jainism and made grants for repairs of the Jain temples and for the maintenance of Jain saints. Other kings who came after him, as well as some of their prominent ministers and commanders, supported Jainism and made generous endowments for Jain temples and institutions.

Small rulers and feudatory chiefs of the Deccan also adopted the Jain faith, for example the Sāntaras, the Kāṅgalvas of Coorg, and the Chāṅgalvas of Changanāḍ.

The era also witnessed keen jealousy between the two main Jain sects, the Digambaras and the Shvetāmbaras. There were splits among the Shvetāmbara sect itself. A number of Jain teachers succeeded each other. Some of them wrote prominent works embodying the Jain doctrine. Hemachandra Sūri, pupil of Deva Surī particularly authored many works. Dharmaghosha Sūri, chief-minister of the ruler of Maṇḍapa built eighty-four Jain temples and produced 'seven compendiums of knowledge' (*Sapta-Jñānakosha*). His son Jhāñjhaṇḍeva installed gold and silver flagstaffs at Shatruñjaya and Ūrjayanta. Dharmaghosha Sūri had great magical powers.

A number of Jain writers flourished during this period.

Abhayadeva (1064) wrote commentaries on the nine *Āṅgas*. Poems on the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras were written, as for example *Shantinātha-charita* of Deva Sūri and Māṇikachandra, *Neminātha-charita* of Sūrāchārya and Maladhāri Hemachandra and the *Pārshvanātha-charita* of Vādirāja, Bhavadeva and Māṇikyachandra. Religious short stories were also written at this time, as for example the *Kathākosha* of Jineshvara. Āshādhara, a poet of Mālwa, was the author of more than twenty works of which the most prominent are *Sāgara Dharmāmṛita* and *Anāgāra-Dharmāmītra*. The great logician poet, Vādirāja, who flourished at the court of the Western Chālukya king Jayasīma, was a prolific writer. He is credited with two works on logic, *Pramāna-Nirṇaya* and *Nyāyavinishchayavivaraṇa*, a work on duties of householders entitled *Upāsakāchāra*, a lyrical poem, *Ekībhāvastotra* and three works on meditation and spiritual practices namely *Ārāḍhanā*, *Sāmayikapāṭha* and *Adhyātmashataka*. Two Jain writers of plays wrote on themes connected with the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*. These were Rāmāchandra, (1110-73) a pupil of Hemachandra, who wrote eleven dramas and a collection of verses, and Hastimalla author of four plays of considerable merit.³⁶

Sikhism

Something has already been said about the founder of the Sikh religion, Gurū Nānak, and of the *gurūs* who came after him and gave the religion a firm footing. The main tenets of Sikh belief will be given here.

For Gurū Nānak the meaning and the purpose of human existence is to realise the existence of the eternal God. Man, who is of corrupt nature, perverse and deluded, is chained to an endless round of births and deaths. Fortunately the divine order (*Hukam*) of God has so created and regulated the world, that awakened by the *Gurū* the voice of God can speak to him. He then begins to comprehend the Word (*Shabad*) of God. The impediment (*Haumai*) is then removed. By meditating on the name (*Nām*) of God, he realises the Truth (*Sach*). Such a man

36 See vol. 2 of this series, *Political History, The Sikhs*, pp. 518-23.

is freed from his impurities and comes progressively nearer to God, till he is finally united with the Eternal One and there is no return to the cycle of existence.

Sikhism believes in one God. The *Mūl-Mantra* with which the *Ādi Granth* opens, says : 'This being is One. He is eternal. He is immanent in all things and the Sustainer of all things. He is the Creator of all things. He is immanent in His creation. He is without fear and without enmity. This Being is not subject to time. He is beyond birth and death. He is himself responsible for His own manifestation. (He is known) by the *Gurū's* grace.'³⁷ Nānak's God is a personal one, a God of grace to whom man can show his love and adoration. The unity of God is emphasised by him. He is Hari, Rām and Gopāl. He is also Allāh, Khudā and Sāhib. He is one, even though there are many manifestations of Him. God is both formless and with form. The *Ādi Granth* says 'From His absolute condition He, the Pure One, became manifest; from *nirguṇa* (unmanifest) He became *saguṇa* (manifest)'.³⁸ Recalling the account of creation in the *Genesis*, the *Ādi Granth* says : 'For countless aeons there was undivided darkness. There was neither earth nor heavens, but only the infinite Order of God (*Hukam*). When it pleased Thee Thou didst create the world, establishing Thy creation without visible supports. Thou didst create Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Shiva, and Thou didst spread abroad the allurements of *māyā*'.³⁹ God is not only creator, He is also the sustainer and the destroyer. This concept is much like the one of the Hindu *trimūrti*. In fact the *Ādi Granth* approaches very near to it : 'He, the One, is Himself Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Shiva, and He Himself performs all'.⁴⁰ God is the absolute sovereign, eternal and immanent.

Man⁴¹ is full of pride, egoism and sin. The *Ādi Granth* says 'Greedy beyond measure, he indulges his desire by drinking the

37 Jodh Singh, *Guramati Nirāṇay*, p. 1.

38 Siddh Goshtī, 24, *Ādi Granth*, p. 940.

39 *Ādi Granth*, pp. 1035-6 (*māyā*=illusive power or ignorance).

40 *Ramakalī Ashṭapadī*, 9,12; *Ādi Granth*, p. 908.

41 The word used in Sikh scriptures is *mun* which approximates to 'heart', 'mind' or 'soul'—the faculty with which one thinks, decides and feels.

poison of *māyā*. Never does he find his peace in love of the One. He is like a fish caught on a hook. The heedless man flits here and there like a bumble-bee, seeking through his senses indulgence in many foolish evils. Like an elephant he is trapped because of his lust. He is bound and his head jabbed with a goad.⁴²

What keeps the man bound to existence instead of proceeding on the quest for God? It is, says Nānak, his *haumai*. The *Ādi Granth* says: 'As iron is thrown into a furnace, melted, and recast, so he who fastens his attentions on *māyā*, is incarnated again and again. Without understanding, all he gathers is suffering upon suffering. Through the influence of *haumai* he transmigrates and wanders in doubt.'⁴³ It is *haumai* that grips unregenerate man and so forms his life pattern, that instead of trying for release and salvation he is tied down to the wheel of transmigration. Thus by the influence of *haumai* the deluded man comes under the sway of *māyā* and thinks not of God: 'For the love of silver and women the fool is entangled in duality and forgets the divine Name'.⁴⁴

How can the man, bound by *haumai* and oppressed by *māyā*, attain salvation? Salvation, Nānak believes depends both on God's grace and the individual's own effort. When God favours His devotee He leads the man to the appropriate Gurū. But in a sense the true Gurū is God Himself. By one's works his birth is determined, but it is 'through grace that the door of salvation is found'.⁴⁵ Truth can be found through submission to *Hukam*, the divine Order. Nanak explains *Hukam* as follows: 'The *Hukam* is beyond describing, (but this much we can understand that) all forms were created by the *Hukam*, that life was created through the *Hukam*, and that greatness is imparted in accordance with the *Hukam*. Distinctions between what is exalted and what is lowly are the results of the *Hukam* and in accordance with it suffering comes to some and joy to others. Through the *Hukam* one receives blessing

42 *Ādi Granth*, pp. 1187-8; *Basant Ashṭapadi* 2 (1), (2) and (4).

43 *Ādi Granth*, p. 752; *Sūhi Ashṭapadi* 4(I-IR).

44 *Ādi Granth*, p. 416; *Āsā Ashṭapadi*, 9(2).

45 *Japjī*, 4; *Ādi Granth*, p. 2.

and another is condemned to everlasting transmigration. All are within the *Hukam*; none is beyond its authority. Nānak, if anyone comprehends this *Hukam* his *haumai* is purged.⁴⁶

The way to salvation is by continual reading of the scriptures, meditation on God, the inward disciplines of love, faith, mercy, humility, compassionate deeds, and upholding of the truth. There must be adoring love of God and complete surrender to Him, chanting of the Holy Name (*japa*) and moving in the company of true believers (*satsang*). At the same time fear of God must be maintained, as the *Ādi Granth* says 'Without such fear no one crosses the Ocean of Existence, but if one dwells in fear to it is added love'.⁴⁷ By these means the believer becomes like God and ultimately becomes one with Him. Perfect joy and peace are attained. The individual light is blended in the Light of God (*jotī jotī samāuṇā*). The *ātmā* (soul) becomes one with the *Paramātmā* (God), and inner duality dies.⁴⁸

Nānak was against caste distinctions and idolatry. He considered pilgrimage (*tīrath*) and ascetic practices valueless in the quest for God. Mere knowledge without devotion meditation etc., was also not of much use. One could live a family life and attain salvation. 'Such is the greatness of the true Gurū', the *Ādi Granth* says, 'that even surrounded by wife and sons one can obtain salvation'.⁴⁹ But family attachments were to be given up. 'Domestic involvements is a whirlpool', says the *Ādi Granth*.⁵⁰

Sikhism is commonly regarded as a blend of Hindu beliefs and Islām (Sūfism). The influence of the *bhaktī* movement on it can't be denied, but the influence of Sūfism, if at all, was marginal. Nānak's thought is in conflict with the Sūfīs in his acceptance of the doctrines of *karma* and transmigration. In fact despite the similarities with Hinduism and Islām, Sikhism was a new path for God-realisation, different from conventional Hindu and Muslim beliefs. The *Ādi Granth* says 'Neither the

46 *Japjī*, 1; *Ādi Granth*, p. 1.

47 *Ādi Granth*, p. 151; *Gaurī*, 1.

48 *Ādi Granth*, p. 661; *Dhanāsarī*, 4.

49 *Ādi Granth*, p. 661; *Dhanāsarī*, 4.

50 *Ādi Granth*, p. 989-90; *Mārū*, 2.

Veda nor the *Kateb* know the mystery'.⁵¹

Islam

(a) *Islām in Medieval History*

Curiously enough the ingress of Islām in India began with Sūfism, a creed which orthodox Islām did not really recognise. Three centuries after the Ghaznavid conquest of the Punjāb, the first of the Sūfī saints, Shaikh Ismā'il of Lahore appeared. He was followed by many others like Data Ganj Bakhsh, Lakhī Data and the renowned Khvāja Mu'in-ud-din of Ajmer. Multān became the centre of the Suhrāwardīs as distinct from the Chistīs. One of them Makhdūm Lāl Shahbāz Qalandar carried their teachings to Sind. In Gujarāt the Ismā'īliya sect became prominent, and the Carmathians a branch of these became so active that 'Alā-ud-dīn had to suppress them and Raziyya had to drive them back from Delhi which they threatened. Another branch, the Fātimid, who came from Yemen were quieter. Yet another branch of Sūfīs were the Assassins. One of them, Shaikh Sadr-ud-dīn identified the gods of the Hindu *trimūrti*—Brahmā, Vishṇu and Shiva—with the Prophet. The Deccan too was the centre of Sūfī activity, and many saints came into prominence, the chief of them being Sayyid Mazhar Walī of Trichinopoli, Bābā Fakhr-ud-dīn, Shaikh Muntakhab-ud-dīn, Sayyid Ibrāhīm Shahīd, Zari-Zarbakhsh and Muhammad al-Husainī of Gulbarga. In Bengal Shaikh Jalāl-ud-dīn Tabrīzī acquired fame. The Chishtī school became supreme and had the most following.

In the Sultānate period the Sūfī doctrine was further developed. Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya was one of the greatest Sūfīs of the Chishtī order in India. The Sūfīs developed a loving devotion to God and believed that everything was God. The doctrine of *fanā*, the annihilation of the Self was developed. It was believed that the soul was different from the body and akin to the universal soul. The Sūfīs came to regard service to humanity as part of religion. They justified music, although it

was not sanctioned by orthodox Islām. The Sūfīs were devout Muslims. They kept within the limit of *shar'*, the Islāmic law, but they interpreted the teachings of the *Qurān* in an esoteric light and emphasised inward intuitive experience.

In the Mughal period the Sūfī teachers continued to hold sway. Many Indian Muslims became their disciples. But the growth of Sūfism was looked on with disfavour by the orthodox *'ulamās* who held high posts as *qazīs* or legal advisers. As a result the Mahdawī movement came into being. Its object was to bring back erring Muslims into the orthodox fold. A new feature was also the differences arising between the orthodox Sunnīs, and the Shiāhs who were in the minority. The former often had the backing of rulers, who were largely Sunnīs.

When Akbar came to the throne he found the bigoted Sunni *'ulamā* represented by Shaikhul Islām, Makhdūm al-Mulk and the *sadr-us-sudur*, Abdun-Nabī. The Sūfīs were losing their persuasiveness and Shaikh Salīm Chishtī did not wield the same influence as the renowned Khwāja Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya of former times. Disgusted by the petty bickerings of the *'ulamās* Akbar declared himself as the secular and spiritual head of the state, and began a series of reforms. At the same time the Naqshbandiya sect of the Sūfīs came into prominence and injected fresh life into Sūfism. The aim of this school was to bridge the gap between Islām and Sūfism by doing away with such practices as were repugnant to the orthodox Islāmic faith, like music, repetition of religious formulas, keeping of long vigils, collective visits to shrines and the making of vows and offerings in the names of saints for achieving worldly ends. At the same time its advocate, Syed Ahmad, took up a strong stand against Hindus. He undid much of the work of reconciliation among the two religions, started by the Chishtīs. But the sect failed to attract Muslims on any large scale. Another school which came into being was that of the Qādirīyas, which traces its origin to Shaikh 'Abul Qādir of Gīlan and was introduced into India by Shaikh 'Abul Haqq of Delhi. The Qādirīya school continued to be popular among the better educated Muslims, and had two distinguished disciples in Prince Dārā Shukoh and his sister Jahān Ārā.

With Aurangzīb's coming the Sūfī movement received a setback. He insisted that all Muslims should strictly follow the *sharī'at* and severely punished those who didn't. His period was marked out by efforts made to codify and clarify the Muslim law. But there was no broadness of vision and Islāmic religion was confined into narrow channels due to religious bigotry and intolerance.

In the eighteenth century there arose the great Islāmic teacher, Shāh Waliullāh of Delhi. His ideas and doctrines found reflection in the Wāhhābi movement. In this emphasis was placed on the study of *fiqh* and *hadīth*. Unfortunately the Wāhhābis became militant and massive conversion of Hindus followed in their wake. It is erroneously believed by some that these conversions were voluntary. They were rather accomplished by temptation of money and power, and often by sheer force and violence.

(b) *The Main Tenets of Islām*

Islām propounds a God of mercy and justice rather than of power and revenge. The *Qurān* says 'Allāh the Beneficent, the Merciful'. His first attribute is *rubūbiyya* i.e. the maintainer and nourisher of life. He provides inner guidance (*hidāya*) to all beings for their sustenance and protection. The *Qurān* says 'He hath created everything and hath meted out for it a measure'.⁵² Another concept of the world order is *taqdīr* (destiny). This means the regularity and consistency which governs the universe. There is a proper assessment of everything and its condition of existence is prescribed. Nothing can move outside the limits of that fixed state. God also provides for the moral guidance of man. 'If He is the creator of the world and such is the fullness of His providence that each atom has its fill, and each ant its sufficiency, how then can one believe that He does not provide for the moral guidance of man?'⁵³ Human life too is not finally closed by death. The body is not

⁵² *Qurān*, 25,2 (trans. Pickthall) Quotations from the *Qurān* scripture are from this translation.

⁵³ Abū-'l-Kalām Āzād, *Tar.* I, 56.

all. The *Qurān* says, 'Do you think then that We had created you for naught, and that ye would not be returned to us?'⁵⁴ Simple creatures get more and more complex in evolution. When man dies he stands before God to be judged.

The second attribute of God is universal compassion (*rahmān* and *rahīm*). In the *Qurān* God says 'My Mercy embraceth all things'.⁵⁵ Man is the most favoured of all God's creatures, and the one for whom all else is made. 'He has granted you all you require' says the *Qurān*.⁵⁶ That which is most useful in the world survives rather than that which is fittest. Also truth (*haqq*) conquers falsehood (*bāṭil*). The *Qurān* says 'And say truth has come and falsehood has vanished. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish'.⁵⁷ The transition from falsehood to truth, however, is gradual. Even if man commits evil, God's mercy gives him the opportunity to mend himself. It is only when he repeatedly spurns this chance that he is punished. 'Those who shall repent' says the *Qurān*, 'and believe and do good deeds; as for such, Allāh will change their evil deeds to good deeds'.⁵⁸ Worship of God is not enough. One must love Him. And the best way to love God is to love His creatures. If one retaliates to a wrong-doing the retaliation must not be out of proportion to the harm done, but forgiveness is better. One must hate the sin but not the sinner. The *Qurān* says 'The return for an evil act is an evil act, the like thereof; but he who pardons and thus mends matters, God will requite him'.⁵⁹

The third and last attribute of God is justice. God is 'the Master of the Day of Judgement'. The word used for the reward of a good act and the punishment of an evil one is *kasb* or 'earning'. Man either earns his reward or earns his punishment. A good act wins God's favour, a bad one attracts his disfavour. 'He who doth right' says the *Qurān*, 'it is for

54 *Qurān*, 23,115.

55 *Ibid.*, 7,156.

56 *Ibid.*, 14,34.

57 *Ibid.*, 17,81.

58 *Ibid.*, 25,70.

59 *Ibid.*, 42,40.

himself. And he who doth evil, it is for himself; and thy Lord will not deal unfairly with His servants'.⁶⁰

Among the adherents of Islām three stages are distinguishable

- (a) *islām* means following the dogma of religion, namely prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and the poor-tax;
- (b) *īmān*, the development of inner belief and conviction rather than observing outward forms;
- (c) *ihsān* the final perception of reality and a mystical vision of God.

Islām believes there is only one God, Allāh. There is no one who intercedes between God and man. So Muslims should worship Allāh alone and not any other gods, deities, spirits angels or supermen. God sends His divine guidance (*hudā*) to everyone. The *Qurān* says 'And there is not a single person to whom a warner has not been sent'.⁶¹ Although in practice some of the Muslim monarchs made bigotry and religious persecution their creed, Islām does not teach intolerance. The *Qurān* says 'Revile not those unto whom they pray beside Allāh lest they revile God wrongfully through ignorance. Thus unto every nation have we made their deed seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return, and He will tell them what they used to do'.⁶²

(c) *Sūfīsm*

Sūfīsm, also known as Tasawwuf, is Islāmic mysticism. There are various views about how the Sūfīs got their name. According to one view they were sitters in the shrine (*ashabi-safas*), according to another they were an Arab tribe of Suffa. Other views are—they are so called because they wore woollen garments (*soof*=wool); or from *sūff* a row, as they will stand in the first row of men on the Day of Judgement; or from the Greek *sophia*, meaning they were sophists. The most probable

60 *Ibid.*, 41,46.

61 *Ibid.*, 35,24.

62 *Qurān*, 10,109.

origin, however, seems to be from *sāfa* (pure), implying that the Sūfīs were those with pure hearts.

The Sūfīs rely on the *Qurān* as the source of their creed as much as other Muslims, but they gave it a new interpretation. Mystic union with God is the central belief. Shaqīq of Balkh, for instance defines trust in God (*tuwakkul*) as a mystical state (*hāl*). Abū Yazīd (Bāyazīd) al-Bisṭāmī claimed actually to have achieved union with God. He exclaimed 'Glory be to me! how great is my majesty!' (*Subhānī! mā a'zama sha'nī!*). Describing the state of rapture experienced by him he says 'So He drew me near, appointing for me a way to Him nearer than soul to body. Then He said "Abu Yazīd, all of them are My creatures, except thee". I replied, "So I am Thou, and Thou art I, and I am Thou"'.⁶³ How is this union to be achieved? The *Risāla* of al-Qushayrī, which is the classic description of Sūfism gives the following steps:⁶⁴

1. *Tawba* (conversion). In the *Qurān* God commands 'And turn all together to God, O you believers; haply so you will prosper'.⁶⁵
2. *Mujāhada* (earnest striving). It is necessary to fight against lust rather than fight the infidels in the field of war. God helps such persons, as the *Qurān* says 'But those who struggle in our cause, surely We shall guide them in our ways'.⁶⁶
3. *Khalwa wa-'uzla* (solitariness and withdrawal), the former in the beginning and the latter towards the end.
4. *Taqwā* (the awe of God). The *Qurān* says 'Surely the noblest among you in the sight of God is the most godfearing of you'.⁶⁷
5. *Wara* (abstention). The Prophet declared 'One of the signs of a man's excellence as a Muslim is that he abandons what does not concern him'.

63 *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Vol. 2, 1970, p. 608.

64 *Ibid.*, pp.615-6.

65 *Qurān*, 24,31.

66 *Ibid.*, 29,69.

67 *Ibid.*, 49,13.

6. *Zuhd* (renunciation). This includes everything, even indulgences which are permitted.
7. *Samt* (silence). This includes both outward silence as well as inner acceptance of whatever God decrees. The Prophet said 'Whoever believes in God and the Last Day, let him speak good, or else be silent'.
8. *Khawf* (fear). The mystic fears that God may punish him both in this world and the next.
9. *Rajā'* (hope). The person who hopes to find God succeeds in finding Him.
10. *Huzn* (sorrow). This means being repentant of the sins committed.

Thus the Sūfī moves from one stage to another till finally *Rīqā* (satisfaction) the twentieth station is achieved. Other Sūfī saints vary these stations (*muqāmāt*) somewhat. Shaikh Shihāb-ud-dīn Suhrāwardī conceives of them as ten, viz: repentance, abstinence, piety, poverty, patience, gratitude, fear, hope, contentment and submission to the divine will. By passing through these states the Sūfī mystic ultimately achieves union with God. But this is achieved by experiencing nine emotional conditions (*hāl*) the culmination of which is union. These stages are

1. Love (*muhabbat*). This implies restlessness for the desire of God-vision.
2. Yearning or longing (*shauq*). This is of two kinds, that of the lovers of qualities *sifat* which yearns for the Beloved's grace, mercy and kindness and that of Being (*zāt*) which desires union with the Beloved.
3. *Ghairat* or jealousy, means being one-pointed in the service of God and keeping away every other thought from the mind.
4. *Qurb* or proximity, nearness of God.
5. *Hāyā* or shame, i.e. shame of being found wanting in sincerity.
6. *Uns-o-Haibat* (intimacy and awe). When God shows His majesty the seeker is awed. But soon when God's beauty is felt there is a feeling of intimacy (*uns*).

7. *Qabz-o-bast* (contraction and expansion). *Qabz* is the contraction of the heart in the state of the being veiled (*hijāb*) and *bast* denotes the expansion of the heart in the state of revelation (*kahf*).
8. *Fana-o-baqa* (annihilation and subsistence). The real persists and the phenomenal passes away. *Fana* is all that is other than God and *baqa* is God alone.
9. *Ittisal* (union). The distinction between the I and the not-I completely disappears and the mystic attains union (*wasl*).

The Sūfīs did not stop at mere spiritual advancement or mystical ecstasy. They believed in active social service. A teacher advised his follower to 'Live in society and bear the blows and buffets of the people'.⁶⁸ Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya pointed out two aspects of devotion to God—obligatory (*lāzmī*) and *mutā'addi* (communicable). In the *lāzmī* devotion the benefit which accrues is confined to the devotee alone, while in the other kind in which a man strives to help his fellow beings the reward is 'endless and limitless'.⁶⁹ The Sūfī is asked to attend to the people affected by poverty and misery. Another thing which a Sūfī mystic was expected to do was to withdraw himself from the world. 'The rejection of the world' says Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya 'does not mean that one should strip himself of his clothes or put on a loin-cloth and sit idle. Instead what comes to him unasked he should accept, but not hoard it. He should not place his heart in anything. Only this is rejection of the world.'⁷⁰ The Chishtī saints advised their disciples to keep only what was absolutely necessary.⁷¹ Pacifism and non-violence was another Sūfī principle. 'If a man places thorns in your way' said Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya 'and you do the same, it will be thorns everywhere'.⁷² Patience, endurance, elimination of anger, introspection and giving up of all thoughts of revenge for any wrong done, were qualities

68 *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 237.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 411.

70 *Fawā'id-ul-Fuād*, p. 9.

71 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

72 *Ibid.*, pp. 86-7.

advocated by the Sūfīs. Many of the saints were vegetarians and did not favour slaughter of animals. Some of them cut themselves off completely from kings, politics and government service. The Muslim mystics of the middle ages permitted only two means of livelihood to their more advanced disciples—cultivation of wasteland (*ihya*) and unasked for charity (*futuh*). Of these they preferred the second one.

The Sūfī mystics became instrumental in bringing about a social and a cultural revolution. Barnī remarks that as a result of the teachings of these mystics 'vices among men have been reduced'. Another contribution of theirs was that with their broadminded attitude to religion they brought Hindus and Muslims closer. Amīr Khusrav says:

Though the Hindu is not faithful like me
He often believes in the same thing as I do.⁷³

Another Sūfī says:

O you who sneer at the idolatry of the Hindu,
Learn also from him how worship is done.⁷⁴

73 Quoted K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India, During the Thirteenth Century*, Asia, 1961, p. 263.

74 *Ibid.*,

Art and Architecture

In beginning Islām did not materially influence Indian art. The Muslims were in small numbers and there were very few craftsmen among them. Besides they were almost exclusively interested in architecture. Before the advent of the Mughals there was little progress in art. Painting was prohibited by Islāmic religion and did not catch on till later. However, the Muslims did not put any restriction on traditional Indian painting which continued as before.

(A) ARCHITECTURE

1000-1300—The main architectural patterns were noticeable in the temples of the period. There were three main styles—the Nāgara, the Drāviḍa and the Vesara. The Nāgara style prevailed in the region between the Himalayas and the Vindhya. The distinctive features are the cruciform plan and the curvilinear tower. A number of projecting angles and facets are incorporated. The most representative examples of this kind of architecture are the Dashāvatāra temple at Deogarh and the brick temple at Bhitargāon, both in Uttar Pradesh. The tower of the temple at Deogarh has a big sized *āmalaka* as its crown. The projections on the body of the sanctum go right up to the top of the tower. These two features also mark out the Nāgara style. The tower of the graceful Mahādeva temple at Nachnā Kuṭhārā has a

slight convex curvature as it goes up, and approaches the Nāgara style. So too is the brick temple of Lakshmaṇa at Sirpur (Madhya Pradesh).

The Drāviḍa style temples are to be found in the country lying between the Kriṣṇā river and cape Kanyākumārī, known as the Draviḍa country. The outstanding and common characteristic of the Drāviḍa style temple is the pyramidal elevation of the tower, built storey upon storey, each being a replica of the sanctum cella. Each storey is slightly smaller than the one below it. At the crown is a dome known as the *stūpī* or *stūpikā*. Later on the storeys were built more compressed together and covered by a series of details. The Drāviḍa temples have an inner square chamber as the sanctum cella with a bigger square enclosure having a roof which serves as the circumambulatory passage. This style was already in evidence in the temples of the Gupta period before it fully matured.

The Vesara style of Indian temple architecture was prevalent between the Vindhya and the river Kriṣṇa. Some scholars equate it with the Chālukyan style which flourished in the Kanaḍa country and reached the highest point of its development in Mysore under the Hoysalas. Like the Drāviḍa, the Chālukyan temple has a *maṇḍapa* (hall) and a *vimāna*, and sometimes another *maṇḍapa* in front. The *vimāna* has a pyramidal tower dome shaped at the top. The *maṇḍapa* has a flat roof supported on pillars. Later on the tower was built with ornamental niches and having a rather compressed appearance. In contrast with the Drāviḍa style the cells are enclosed within a covered ambulatory. The *maṇḍaps* are bigger than the *vimānas*. Sometimes three or four shrines are built around a central *maṇḍapa*. The external surface of these temples is covered by rich plastic ornament fretted exuberantly from top to bottom. The ceilings, pillars and door frames, too, are decorated in this ornate manner. Besides these bear a lustrous polish so that they shine out in the dim interior light. The Chālukyan temples are excellent specimens of superb and ornate Indian architecture.

Examples of the Nāgara style of temples have been found in Orissā, central India, Rājputana, Gujarāt and Kāthiāwār, the Deccan and the Sindhu-Gaṅgā valleys. The prominent Orissan temples are the Parashurāmeshvara temple in

Bhuvaneshvara, temples at Gandharadi, the Mukteshvara shrine at Siddhāranya, the Brahmeshvara temple, the temple of Rājārānī, the Līngarāja temple of Bhuvaneshvara and the celebrated Sun temple of Konārak. Among the central Indian temples there are the Lakshmaṇa temple at Sirpur, the brick temple at Bhītargāon, the Vaidyanātha Mahādeva temple at Baijnāth, the Vishvanatha temple at Maribāgh (old Rewā state), the temple at Amarkantak ascribed to Rājā Karṇa of Dāhala and the famous Khajurāho group of temples. In Rājputāna we have the circular temple at Bairāt, a group of temples in Osia near Jodhpur, the Nīlakaṇṭheshvara temple at Kekind and Somesvara at Kirāḍu (both in Jodhpur), and the Jain temples at Kumbharia in southern Rājputāna. In Gujarāt and Kāthiāwār there is the well known Solānki temple. At Gop in the Barda hills in Kāthiāwar there is a temple of unusual shape, being the oldest structural temple of this region. Other temples are found at Than, Visvavada, Harshadmata, Pindara and Villeshvara. There is the Varāha temple at Kadvar and the Sun temple at Sutrapada. In the Deccan the Nāgara style of temples are found at Aihole, Paṭṭadakal, Mahākūṭeshvara and Ālampur all situated in the Krishṇa-Tuṅgabhadra basin. The temple of Ambaranātha in the Thānā District (Bombay) is the most outstanding monument of the type. There are a group of nine temples in Balsane in Khāndesh. The temple of Goṇḍeshvara at Sinnar, near, Nāsik is a well preserved example of the Deccan temples. The Nīlakaṇṭheshvara temple at Udayapura in old Gwālīor was built by the Paramāra king, Udāyadīta. The Sindhu-Gaṅgā valleys which comprises the upper belt of northern India, particularly the rich plain watered by the Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sindhu rivers, have a few temples of the Nāgara style. Most of these temples were destroyed by the Muslim conquerors of India. There are the monolithic temples at Masrur (Kāngrā), the temples at Chambā, those in the Mānbhum and Burdwān districts of West Bengal, and in the Bānkurā district of the same province.

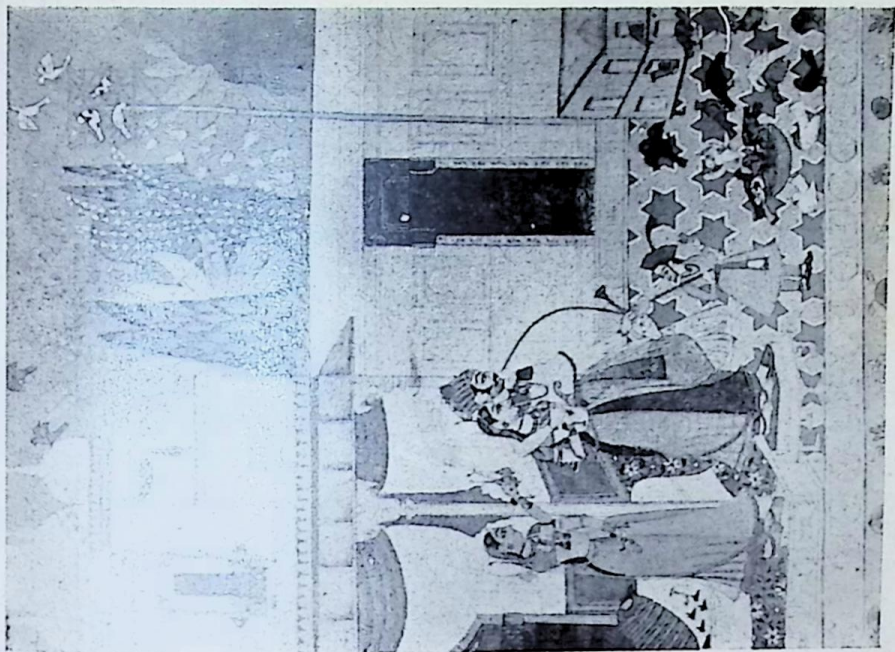
The Drāviḍa style temples were evolved from the rock-cut and *ratha* type designs of old. With Narasiṃhavarman II (695-722) these were replaced by structural temples. The full fledged Drāviḍa style is evident in the temples built thereafter.

These are the Vaishṇava temple of Vaikunṭha Perumal at Kāñchīpuram, the Mukteshvara and Mataṅgeshvara temples at the same place, the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭadakal the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram, and the famous Kailāsa temple at Ellora. These were built by the Pallavas. Thereafter at the end of the ninth century the Cholas became dominant in the south. The main temples built by them were the Vijayālaya Choleshvara temple at Narttamalai, the Koraṅganātha temple at Srinivasanallur (Trichinopoly district) the Brihadīshvara temple built by Rājārājā at Tanjore, the Gangaikondacholapuram temple built by Rājendra Chola (1025) and two temples at Tanjore, the Airāvateshvara and the Tribhuvaneshvara built in the thirteenth century.

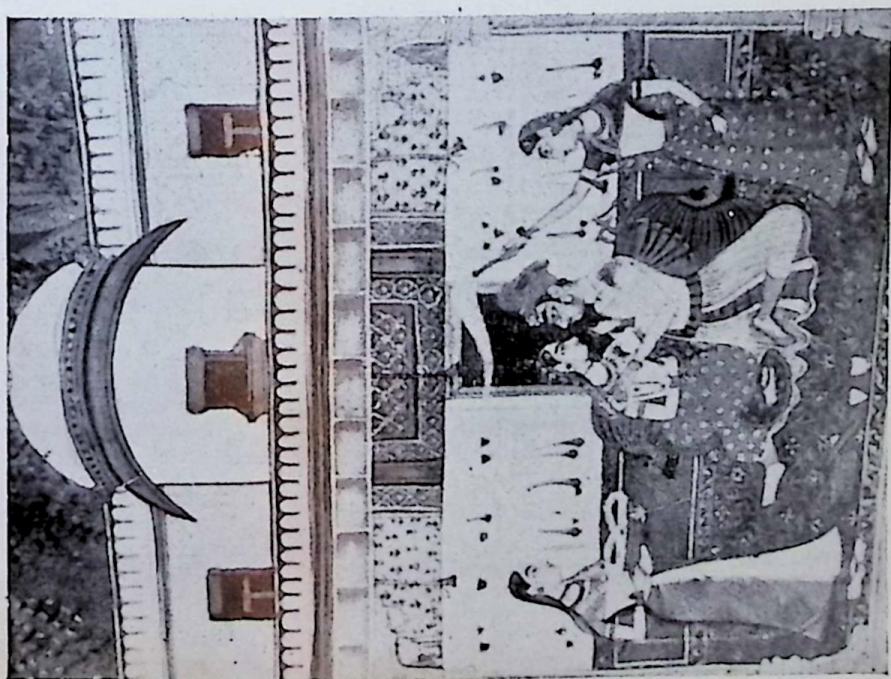
Of the Chālukyan style of architecture we have numerous examples. At Kukkanur in Hyderabād State there are a number of such temples of which that of Kalleshvara is the most important. There is the Jain temple at Lakkundi, the Mukteshvara temple at Chauddadampur, the temples of Siddheshvara at Haveri, Someshvara at Haralhalli and Siddarāmeshvara at Niralgi. The Kāshīvish-veshvara temple at Lakkundi is the maturest expression of the Chālukyan style. An equally impressive production is the temple of Mahādeva at Ittaqi in the Hyderabād State, (1112) the ornamental work of which on the pillars and door-frames, say Meadows Taylor, is such that 'no chased work in silver or gold could possibly be finer'.¹ Cousens describes this temple as 'probably the finest in the Kanarese districts after Halabid in Maisur'.² The temple of Mallikārjuna at Kuruvatti in Bellary district is another example of this style. That of Dodda Vasavanna at Dambal is built on a star-shaped plan. The Chālukyan style finds its highest development in the temples of Dvarasamudra in Mysore which consists of a group of nearly eighty temples. These temples are more an exuberance of sculpture than skill in architecture. As Percy Brown says about them 'These Mysore temples owe their character more to the sculptor than to the mason. Gone is the structural

1 Meadows Taylor, *Architecture of Dharwar and Maisur*, p. 47.

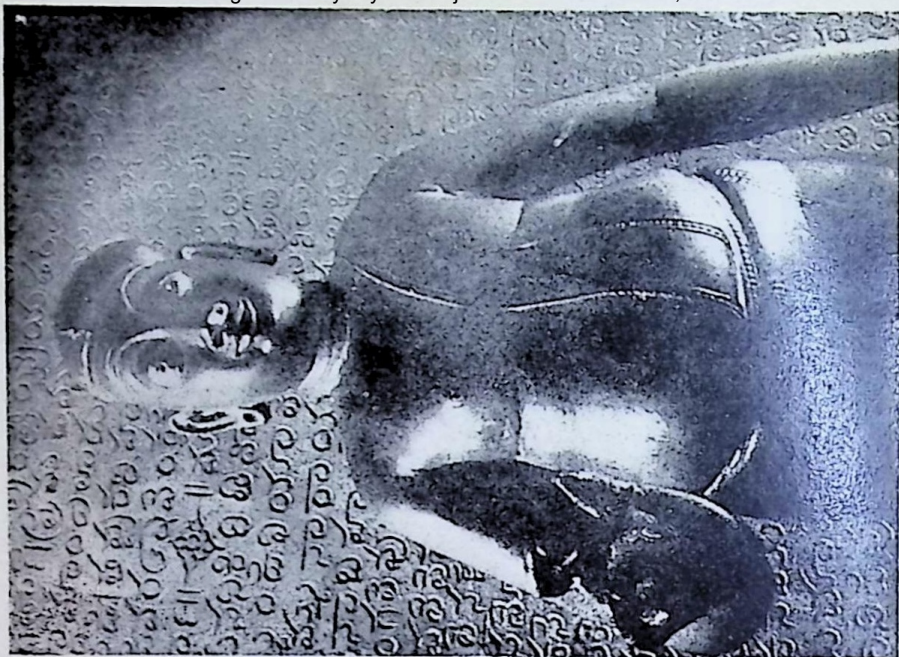
2 Henry Cousens, *Agricultural Antiquities of Western India*, London, 1962, p. 30.



Noble and Lady watching Pigeon
(Bundi School, 1662)



Lovers in a Pavilion (Bundi School, 1682)



Upasaka 14th cent. (South India)



Jahangir watching an elephant fight

basis, the fundamental framework evolved through the experience of the previous workers in the field, and in its place is an arrangement of manifold planes, projections and courses of masonry, each intricately carved and beautiful in itself, even beautiful in aggregation, but not, as a whole, amounting to a work of significant architecture in the full sense of the word'.³ In the Chenna Keshava temple group at Belur there are a number of fine temples. The Hoysaleswara temple at Halebidu is regarded as the highest achievement of the Chālukya-Hoysala school of architecture.⁴ The Kedāreshwara was the 'chapel royal' of the Hoysala kings. Fergusson describes it as 'a gem of Indian architecture'.⁵

Apart from the three styles of temples found in this period—the Nagara, Draviḍa and Vesara of Chālukyan—there are those which do not fall within such fixed patterns. Examples are temples built by a Kāshmir monarch of the name of Lalitāditya Muktapīḍa (724-60). In northern India there are the excavations at Pāhārpur (north Bengal) which depict a peculiarly unusual kind of Indian architecture. This approximates most to the type of building known as *sarvatobhadra*, a square shrine with four entrances at the cardinal points and an ante-chamber on each side. It has continuous galleries all round, with five storeys, sixteen corners and many turrets and spires.⁶

Muslim Architecture

In about the year 1200 the whole of northern India came under Muslim rule, and Delhi became the capital. The previous architectural patterns of the Hindus were rich in sculpture and decorations, often having representations of human and animals, but Islām prohibited the representation of living beings, and so the builders had to invent other devices of embellishment. Simplicity

3 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu*, p. 70.

4 James Fergusson *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1910, p. 437-8.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 443.

6 *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1957, Vol. V, p. 639.

severity, economy of material and austerity of design replaced the exuberance of Hindu temple architecture. The Muslims had learnt the art of building arches from the Romans. Although this was not an innovation, for the Hindus had built arches in their cave temples, it was more widely used by Muslim architects. The arch and the dome became a characteristic feature of their buildings. As regards material the Muslims architects would have liked to use mortar and lime instead of the traditional stone. But they had to work with Hindu masons who were used to working in stone. So the traditional method of construction was continued with slight difference in the mode. The 'horizontal corbelled' style was introduced with arched niches or *mihrābs*. Even these were not new. Havell says they were made by converting the niches of Hindu and Buddhist temples into plain *mihrābs* after removing the idols from them: 'The Buddhist images were torn from their niches and broken up or melted; the former temple or monastery, if not utterly destroyed, was used as a place of Muhammadan worship, and the empty niches (*mihrābs*) with their arches—lancetted, trefoiled, or sometimes of the earlier Hīnayāna horseshoe form—remained in the walls ... The niche with its changed contents became as common a motif in the Muhammadan art of Arabia, Persia and India, as it had been when it was the shrine of a Buddhist saint'.⁷ The Muslims also adopted the Buddhist type of domes built by the architects of Gandhara who were employed by Persian rulers. The Arabs built their domes with a spike on top. The Muslims substituted this with the *kalasa* and the lotus flower. The early Muslim conquerors demolished Hindu and Jain temples and built their mosques, palaces and mausoleums out of their material. These constructions could hardly have any originality. At best they are a cross between the two styles, Hindu and Muslim. Most of the monuments of the Turkish and Afghan Sultāns are of this kind. After the death of 'Ala-ud-dīn Khaljī Muslim architecture became more individualised but yet it could not free itself from local styles. The Mughal period was the most creative one and new ideas were

⁷ E.D. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, John Murray, London, 1920, p. 107.

introduced. Muslim architecture falls into two broad divisions. Mosques and tombs are types of religious monuments, and others are the secular kind, like palaces, fortresses and city gates.

Architecture of the Sultanate Period

(a) *Slave Dynasty*

The first mosque at Delhi was built by Qutb-ud-dīn Aibak (1206-10) in the year 1197. It was erected on the site of a Hindu temple, and an Arabic inscription on the east wall proclaims that the material of twenty-seven 'idolatrous' temples was used in making it. There is a striking red sandstone building in front of the prayer hall with one big central arch and two smaller arches on either side. The arched facade is a development of the Muslim style, while the arches show that Hindu craftsmen were employed. Instead of proper *voussoirs* projecting courses of masonry as found in the *shikharas* were used by them. Iltutmish, who followed Qutb-un-dīn added a screen of seven arches. He also built the Qutub Minār, a detached tower or minaret 238 feet high, within the extended courtyard. This was probably begun by Qutb-ud-dīn himself, and is the highest stone tower in India. According to Amīr Khusrav it was a minaret for a muezzin, but more likely it was meant to be a tower of victory. The tomb of Iltutmish, who died in 1235, lies near the mosque. The design is Persian though the shafts and the cusped arches suggest an indigenous style. The tomb is in red sandstone with inscriptions in Kufri, Tugra and Nashtaliq characters. Fergusson says 'it is one of the richest examples of Hindu art applied to Muhammadan purposes'.⁸

(b) *The Khaljīs*

In the twelfth century the Mongol wars devastated Central Asia and there was no strong ruler after Iltutmish. There was little progress in architecture, as in all other things. Balban got mausoleum built at the south-east end of the mosque of Quwwat

⁸ *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture.*

ul Islām. This has an arch built with radiating voussoirs on the style which the Muslims derived from the Romans.

With the accession of 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī (1296) there was a renewal of building activity. The Sultān began the construction of a huge tower to rival the Qutub Minār towards the north of the Quwwat ul Islām mosque, but was able to complete only the first storey about seventy-five feet high. He got an imposing gateway, however, built for the mosque towards the south of it, known as the 'Alāi Darwāza. It has a low domed rectangular chamber with geometrical designs and artistic Arabic inscriptions. The arch and walls denote a departure from the old technique. The monument employs Islāmic principles, but the influence of Hindu traditions is unmistakable. Similar in construction is the Jamāat Khānā (congregation hall) at the tomb of Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya.

(c) *The Tughluqs*

The Tughluqs who succeeded the Khaljīs ruled for about a century (1320-1412). Their style does away with lavish ornamentation completely. Instead their buildings are massive and austere. This is evident in the tomb and fortress of Tughluqābad built by Ghiyās-ud-dīn Tughluq, the founder of the dynasty. The tomb is a square structure of red sandstone, extremely thick walls, and a simple white marble dome. This severe and massive building is enclosed by a lofty stone wall with bastions. Muhammad Tughluq had a grand scheme of building a new capital at Daulatābād with a palace of a thousand pillars. All that remains of his project are fortified walls of massive thickness with archways and towers at each end. His successor Firūz Tughluq was a keen builder, as he himself says: 'Among the gifts which God bestowed on me, His humble servant, was a desire to erect public buildings'. Despite his enthusiasm, however, Firūz found to his dismay that the wasteful schemes of his predecessor hardly left him any money. Besides his attempt to transfer the capital from Delhi to Daulatābād had resulted in the ruin of a number of artisans. Even then Firūz built four fortress cities namely, Jaunpur, Fathabād, Hissar and Firūzābād, besides a number of mosques and many tombs including his own.

Firūzābād (now known as Firūz Shāh Kotlā) on the bank of the Yamunā river was surrounded by high battlements and had its main gateway on the western side. There was a Jamī Masjid in it, said to be the largest in the Tughluq age. The city was divided into square and rectangular courtyards containing the hall of public audience, gardens, baths, tombs and so forth. Besides this, Firūz constructed several mosques. These are Kali Masjid, the Khirki Masjid at Jahānpannah, and the Begampuri mosque. He also built his own mausoleum, and that of his prime-minister Khan-i-Jahān Tilangani at Hauz Khās. Tilangani's tomb is distinctive, as it was the first octagonal tomb built in Delhi.

(d) *The Sayyids and Lodhīs*

After Tīnūr's sack of Delhi the Sayyids and Lodhīs occupied the Delhi throne. Their contribution towards architecture was not substantial. A large number of tombs were built on the style of the Tilangani mausoleum. Sikandar Lodī got double domes made, one within the other, with space in between. Other tombs were square without verandas.

(e) *The Sūris*

The Lodī style reached its climax with the coming of Sher Shāh Sūr (1540-55). His tomb at Sasarām in Bihār has a dome which is the second largest in India. Its style with its central octagonal chamber surrounded by arcaded corridors, is very much the same as the many spired Bengali temples. Havell calls it 'one of the noblest of Indian monuments'.⁹ Sher Shāh also got a mosque built at the Purānā Qilā, Delhi. Of this Havell says: 'it can be seen at once that the Indian builder has acquired a perfect mastery of the elements of design introduced by the ritual of Islām and put his own stamp upon them; for there is hardly any direct imitation of foreign models, but a skilful and harmonious adaptation of Hindu tradition to Muhammadan structural requirements. The dome, like all

9 E.B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, John Murray, 1920, p. 114.

Paṭhān domes is crowned by the Indian lotus-and-vase symbol. The crenellated parapet is the lotus-leaf pattern which is seen in the gateway of the Kailāsa temple at Ellora. Lotus flowers fill the spandrels of the arches, and the lotus-bud ornamentation of the soffits is also derived from the traditional symbolism of Hindu and Buddhist shrines. The bracketed cornice is another characteristic Indian feature. The arched openings are beautifully spaced and proportioned, not placed in Persian fashion at the back of a semi-cylindrical niche, but, probably with the idea of saving space within the *Iṭwān* slightly set back within the larger ornamental arches'.¹⁰

Architecture of the Provinces of the Sultanate

The architecture so far described relates to that of the Delhi emperors. The provinces had their own styles. According to Hermann Gotez these fall into three distinguishable groups. Jaunpur, Nāgaur and Mālwa followed the Delhi style. Kāshmir, Gujarāt and Bengal adopted the Hindu pattern. The Deccan had a style of its own.

(a) Jaunpur

The Muslim mosques were mostly built on the remains of Hindu temples, for example the one built with the material of the temple of Atala Devī (1408). Others were the Jāmi 'Masjid, Lāl Darwāzā Masjid, and the Jhanjhirī Masjid. The general pattern of the mosques was determined by the *mullās* or the court officers. But within this the Hindu masons evolved their individual ideas particularly in the construction of arches. Of the hybrid style of these mosques Havell says 'The imposing propylons of the mosques, in which arch and barcket are combined most skilfully, are the adaptations of the Hindu temple gopurams'.¹¹

10 *Ibid.*, p. 114.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 119.

(b) Mālwa

The best monuments of Mālwa architecture are at Dhar, Mandu and Chanderī. These bear the impress of the Delhi style inasmuch as they have pointed arches with spear headed fringes, arch-lintel bracket combination, boat-keel domes, pyramidal roofs and thick walls. But they added new features also. They are, as Marshall says 'as truly living and full of purpose, as instinct with creative genius as the models themselves from which they took their inspiration'.¹² The monuments are almost all concentrated in the city of Māṇḍū. The earlier buildings such as Kamāl Maulā Masjid, Lāl Masjid at Dhar and Dilāwar Khān's Masjid at Māṇḍū were built out of the materials of the Hindu temples which were pulled down, but the later buildings are original, elegant and good specimens of Islāmic style. Limestone has been frequently used in making them. The Tarkin-i-Darwāzā, and Shams Masjid at Nāgaur belong to this class. The palaces of Bāz Bāhadur and Rūpmatī though not of any great architectural merit have interesting histories.

(c) Kāshmir

The architecture of Kāshmir is a blend of Hindu and Muslim styles. This is evident in the mosques and the tombs of saints. Zain-ul-Abidin the Kāshmir ruler was a great builder. He made improvements in the Jāmi' Masjid which was built by Sikandar Shāh and constructed the tomb of his mother and that of Madin Shāh.

(d) Bengal Architecture

The materials used by the Muslim architects of Bengal were the ones generally available there viz., brick, bamboo and timber. The monuments were scientifically planned. The main features of Bengal monuments are curvilinear roofs and heavy short stone pillars supporting tombed arches and brick vaults.

12 John Marshall, *Monuments of Muslim India, Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 3, p. 617.

The most prominent buildings are at Gaur such as the Dākhil Darwāzā, Tantipārā, Chhote Sōnā Masjid and Bārā Sōnā Masjid, and the mausoleum of Makhdūm Akhil Sirāj-ud-dīn. Another centre of architecture was Panduā which has among other buildings, the Adīnā Masjid built by Sikandar Shāh, perhaps the largest in India. It has a big courtyard with arched recesses and ways, but is rather drab. Fergusson says 'a design such as that of the Adīnā mosque would be appropriate for a caravanserai; but in the edifice where beauty and expression were absolutely required, it is far too monotonous'.¹³ The Ēklakhi has been built largely from material obtained from Indian temples. The Dākhil Darwāzā is of brick and is decorated with terracota ornaments.

(e) Gujarāt Style

The Sultāns of Gujarāt were fortunate in being able to enlist the services of some highly accomplished Indian artisans. Their buildings, therefore, show a happy fusion of Hindu and Muslim styles. Smith says 'Hindu construction is freely used but the indispensable domes and polished arches are introduced'.¹⁴ There were three phases in the development of Muslim architecture in Gujarāt. The first beginning from the fourteenth century was marked by the demolition of old temples and their conversion into mosques. Such were the Jāmi' Masjid of Cambay, the mosque of Hilāl Khān Kāzī at Dholka and the Jāmi' Masjids at Patnā and Broach. The second phase began with the reign of Ahmad Shāh I who founded the city of Ahmadnagar (1411). The third and richest period of Islāmic architecture was the one following the accession of Mahmūd Begarha (1459-1511).

Ahmad Shāh I got a large number of mosques and tombs built. Among the mosques were that of Ahmad Shāh within the citadel of the town, the mosque of Haibat Khān, Sayyid Alām's mosque and the renowned Jāmi' Masjid of which Percy Brown says 'it represents a living, growing and expectant style',

13 *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*.

14 V.A. Smith, *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*.

and that it ranks as 'the high watermark of the mosque design in western India if not in the entire country'.¹⁵ In the western cloister of the mosque there is an immense hypostyle hall with 260 tall pillars evenly placed to form a series of square bays. The central portion of the nave is in the form of a shaft square and octagonal at the foot and in the middle and rounded at the top. In the same manner are built the aisles which flank the nave. The extreme wings have one storey each and in the north there is a hanging gallery for the use of women. The variations in the heights of the compartments give the monument added beauty. The facade has a pyramidal effect. The buttresses supporting the central archway richly moulded. The middle arches are symmetrical and graceful.

The glorious period of Islāmic architecture began with the accession of Mahmūd I of Begarha. He built the cities of Champāner, Jūnāgarh and Kheda and enriched them with beautiful buildings. Among the mosques built by him the Jāmi' Masjid is a fine specimen of architecture, mature in design and pleasingly symmetrical. The Nagīnā Masjid is also charmingly built. The Rānī Sīparī mosque is a small structure but exquisitely built with delicate traceries and jewel-like carvings. Fergusson describes it as 'the most exquisite gem at Ahmadābād'.¹⁶ Marshall also praises it. 'It would be difficult to single out a building' he says 'in which the parts are more harmoniously blended or in which balance, symmetry and decorative rhythm combine to produce a more perfect effect'. The Sidi Sayyid mosque at Ahmadābād has highly ornamented and delicately carved stone screens.

Another characteristic construction of this period is the wāv or step-well. A number of these were built. The wāv has a circular or octagonal well-shaft with a flight of steps leading down to it, having regular landings at intervals. The landings are provided with pillared galleries and ornamental balconies. The served as cool retreats during summer. Reference may also be made to the large artificial lake at Sarkhej and the watergate at Kanhariya.

15 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islāmic Period)*.

16 *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. 3, p. 616.

(f) Deccan Architecture

An entirely new kind of architecture was developed by the Bahmanī Sultāns of the Deccan. This had a Persian origin because the founder of the Bahmanī dynasty had brought with him a large number of Persian architects and artisans. But when Muhammad bin Tughluq changed the capital from Delhi to Daulatābād many of the artisans of Delhi went away to Bijāpur and there was a fusion of the Persian and Indian styles. 'Alā-ud-dīn Bahman built a number of buildings at Gulbarga, his capital. The Jāmī Masjid built by him is completely roofed and has no open courtyard. It has a high dome built over the nave of the sanctuary. Other buildings consist of the Bala Hisar and royal tombs. When Ahmad Shāh Wali (1422-36) transferred his capital to Bīdar he got a large number of buildings made there. The Takhtkhana, throne hall the Shāhburj and the royal palace which have survived, give us an idea of the beauty of these buildings. The mosques, such as the Solā Khamba Masjid have open courtyards in the usual manner.

When the Bahmanī empire disintegrated the kingdoms of Bīdar, Golcondā, Ahmadnagar Berar and Bijāpur came into being. Of these Bīdar carried on the progress in architecture. The Barid Shāhī kings were great builders. The tomb of Amīr Barid Shāh (1504-38) is the best of the tombs built by them. This is a tall thick-walled structure of fifty-seven feet built on a large platform. The large dome is ornamented with 'belts of coloured tiles, and decorated with interlaced Arabic sentences'. The characteristic of these tombs are large bulbous domes with decorative and florid design. Some of these tombs were two storeys high. That of Muhammad Quli Qutub (1625) is 'one of the largest and finest, an imposing structure with a fine frieze over the main storey'. The Chār Mīnar or triumphal archway in Hyderābād is the most valuable contribution of the Qutb Shāhīs. It was erected in 1591 on the pattern of the Teen Darwāzā, but is larger in size. Percy Brown says 'It has strength without being aggressive, is dignified yet spirited, while its upper structure displays a graceful inventiveness. Especially noteworthy are the *mīnārs*, which in lightly leaping stages provide the soaring trend so essential in buildings of such a

nature'.¹⁷ The Ādil Shāhī kings of Bijapur were great patrons of art and built many mosques, tombs and palaces. Their architecture shows the influence of the Ottoman Turks, as is evident from the crescent which finds place on the finials of their structures. Their domes were spherical, the arches long, angular and graceful. Instead of pillars they built masonry piers and introduced cornices in projecting eaves. The Jāmi' Masjid of Ali Shāh I, though left incomplete, is one of the most graceful examples of Bijāpurī architecture, though Fergusson thinks it more remarkable 'for the beauty of its details than either the arrangement or extent of its plan'.¹⁸ The Ibrāhīm Rauzā, a mausoleum which Ibrāhīm Ādil Shāh I got built is remarkable for its 'technical accuracy, skilled artistry and delicate and minute carvings of various patterns'. The tomb of Muḥammad Ādil Shāh is a triumph of workmanship, with a surprisingly balanced structure which amazed Fergusson as to how it could stand.¹⁹ Its dome is the second largest in the world.

The other buildings of Bijāpur are not of much interest. The Gagan Mahal (1560) was built to house the king's residence as well as a council chamber.

Vijayanagara

The city of Vijayanagara has been praised by all historians and foreign visitors. Paes considered it 'as large as Rome and very beautiful to look at'. He also noticed the imposing gateways, wide streets, massive fortifications, lovely houses, orchards, groves, temples and market-places. Vijayanagara was destroyed after the battle of Talikota (1565) by its Muslim invaders who wrought untold havoc and devastation, but its remains are an eternal evidence of its vanished glory.

Nothing remains of the palace except ruins, but we know that there was an audience-hall of the king, halls of public and private audience and the Throne Platform or, as Paes calls it,

17 Peroy Brown, *Indian Architecture* (Islamic Period).

18 *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*.

19 He says: 'The most ingenious and novel part of this dome is the mode in which the lateral or the outward thrust is counteracted'.

the House of Victory built by Krishnadevarāya in 1513 to commemorate his conquest of Orissā. These buildings seem to have been well suited for the purpose they were meant, and are also profusely ornamented. The Lotus Mahal a square pavilion with doubly recessed corners, built in two stories, the Elephant Stables with Islāmic appearance and mode, and the Women's Enclosure with its towers having projected balconies, are some of the other buildings.

The ornate and exuberant nature of the Vijayanagara style, however, can best be seen in its beautiful temples. The Amman shrine is a subsidiary temple. The Kalyāna-maṇḍapa is an open pavilion with a raised platform in the middle for exhibiting the images to the devotees on ceremonial occasions. The temple of Pampāpati was considered very sacred, but the most exquisite one was that Viṭṭhalasvāmī which Fergusson says, 'shows the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced'. It is enclosed by pillared cloisters, all round and the entrance is through three gateways. The interior of the temple is profusely ornamented. The Hāzāra Rāma temple is a smaller construction and appears to have been the private chapel of the Vijayanagara kings. The brackets, beams, cornices and ceiling are all profusely ornamented. The friezes of sculptures on the exterior walls of the temple and its enclosure depict the story of the Rāmāyaṇa.

There were temples in other parts of Vijayanagara also. A governor of Krishnadevarāya built one at Tādpatri. The vertical parts of two of its gateways are 'covered with the most elaborate sculpture, cut with exquisite sharpness and precision... and produces an effect richer, and on the whole perhaps better taste than anything else in this style'.²⁰

The Vijayanagara kings were fond of grandeur. They maintained magnificent courts and provided them tall and massive gateways. Similarly the gateways to their temples were impressive and often finely decorated. The southern gateway of the temple of Ekāmbaranātha at Kāñchīpuram is the most important of these. It was built by Krishnadevarāye, and is a colossal structure of ten storeys rising up to 188 feet. Apart

from its massiveness it has a profusion of sculptures and ornamentation.

Rājputānā Architecture

Although the coming of Islām marked a period of decline in Hindu architecture, Rājputānā resisted the ingress of Muslims for a long time and maintained local traditions. The Rājputs were great builders of forts and palaces. The Kīrtistambha of Rānā Kumbha (1440) in Chitor fort is an exquisitely ornamented tower rising up to 122 feet in nine storeys. The mass of decoration says Fergusson 'is kept so subdued, that it in no way interferes either with the outline or the general effect of the pillar'.²¹ Rānā Kumbha also built the great Chaumukha temple at Ranpur (Jodhpur). This is built up of a number of parts of diverse shapes producing a pleasing unified effect. Its graceful domes and lofty spires are admirable. In palace architecture Mān Singh's palace at Gwālior is one of the finest specimens. The Hāthiyā Pol or Elephant Gate at its southern end is a structure of great merit.

MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

(a) Babur and Humayun

Although Mughal architecture begins with Bābur, the two buildings of his which have survived, namely a mosque in Kābulibāgh at Pānīpat and a Jāmi' Masjid at Sambhal in Rohilkhand, do not have any architectural beauty. Their only merit lies in their spaciousness. But Bābur was quick to realise the worth of Indian artisans, and he appreciated the skill which had gone to the making of the palaces of Mān Singh and Vikramājī at Gwālior. Humāyūn was too busy in his wars with Sher Shāh to think about architecture. It was left to his widow Hamīdā Bānū to begin the construction of her husband's mausoleum in 1564, eight years after the emperor's accidental death. The mausoleum of Humāyūn may, therefore, be regarded

21 *Ibid.*, p. 60.

as the first landmark of Mughal architecture. This monument is a blending of Indian and Persian styles. The dome is of white marble while the rest of the building is of red sandstone and white and black marble. It is placed in a well laid out large garden. The Persian influence can be seen in the dome, arched alcove, and the complex of rooms and corridors. The skilful stone masonry, the fanciful *kisoks* and the elegant cupolas bespeak Indian craftsmanship. However with Humāyūn's preoccupation in wars and Bābur's animosity to everything Indian, architecture did not make much progress under the first of the Mughals, as Percy Brown sums up: 'The material records which have survived of both Bābur's and Humāyūn's contributions to the building art of the country are therefore negligible'.²² Luckily there was a brief interregnum following Humāyūn's exile, with Sher Shāh the Afghān ruler who was 'a man of marked constructional propensities and architectural ideals'.²³ The few buildings of his time which remain clearly demonstrate the truth of this observation.

Sher Shah

The buildings of Sher Shāh fall under two groups, one at Sasarām in Bihār which was the scene of his early life, and the other at Delhi the capital of his empire. At Sasarām there are five monuments the most prominent being his own tomb which stands in the middle of a large quadrangular tank. The tomb is octagonal, built in three portions, each one less in size than the one below, with a low and wide dome on top. An arcaded corridor runs round it with graceful arches, projecting eaves and high crenellated parapet. There are pillared *koisks* alternating with oriel windows at a little height. A lotus finial tops the dome. When originally built it was made with glowing blue, red and yellow colours and adorned by elegant patterns. Havell thinks the structure shows Hindu influence: 'The structural scheme of the tomb' he says, 'with its central octagonal chamber

²² *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, p. 525.

²³ *Indian Architecture* (Islāmic).

surrounded by arcaded corridors is very similar to that of the many-spired Bengali temples'.²⁴

Sher Shāh's buildings at Delhi show a return to the ornate architectural style of the Khaljīs. The monuments built by him at his capital are the Moth-kī-Masjid, the Jamāli mosque, the citadel of Purānā Qil'a (old fort) on the site of Indraprastha and the Quil'a-i-Kuhna mosque, Sher Shāh's chapel royal.

The Quil'a-i-Kuhna mosque has been described by Percy Brown as 'a gem of architectural design'. It has been modelled on the style of the Jamāli mosque, and has no cloisters. It consists of just a sanctuary chamber and a courtyard in front, with an octagonal reservoir of water in the centre in which worshippers can bathe. The facade has five elegant arched entrances with a larger archway enclosed by a rectangular frame. The central archway is larger than the others, and behind it is the dome crowned by a fluted finial. The sandstone is inlaid with white marble and patterned with coloured glaze. There are mouldings, carvings and bracketted openings all over the frontage. The interior arrangement is also admirable. The roof depicts the high degree of technical skill of the builders. The cross-ribs and semi-vault are novel devices for its support. The mosque is a valuable link between the past buildings of the Khaljīs and Tughluqs and those of the later Mughals. It recalls the Qutb Minār in its narrow turrets on two sides of the central bay. The turrets at the corner of the back wall resemble the Tughluq style. The slight drop or flatness in the curves at the top of the arches anticipates the 'Tudor' arch of the Mughals.

Akbar

The individual and distinctive tradition of Mughal art began in truth with Akbar. The Mughal Indo-Islāmic and Rājput fashions blend in the architecture of his period. This can be seen in the palace-fortresses at Āgrā and Lāhore. The massive Āgrā fort is built in red stone, as Abu-'l-Fazl says, 'in the fine styles of Bengal and Gujarāt'. It has a radius of one and a half miles and the inner walls go to a height of about seventy

24 E.B. Havell., *A Handbook of Indian Art*, John Murray, 1920, pp. 116-7.

feet. The two palace buildings which still remain, the Akbarī Mahal and Jahāngirī Mahal show a fusion of Hindu and Muslim styles.

The city of Fathpur Sikrī was built by Akbar about twenty-two miles from Āgrā, on a ridge. Work on it was started in 1569, and the city was completed in fifteen years. Among pa'aces the most beautiful are those of Jodhā Bāi, Mariam, Sultānā and Bīr Bal. The other secular buildings are those of the offices, *sarāīs*, pavilions and so forth. The Pānch Mahal is an unusual structure. It has five stories built in a pyramid, each storey having an open pavilion supported on gracefully designed pillars. The pillars in each storey conform to a general scheme and each has a varied pattern and design. The ground floor has as many as eighty-four pillars. Their number diminishes in each successive storey till there are only four in the topmost one supporting the domed canopy. The Turkish Sultānā's house is a single one storeyed apartment with a pillared gallery, built in a setting of paved courts and water-courses. Despite its smallness it is an admirable structure showing the consummate skill of Indian artisans. The carvings are refined and natural. Fergusson says of the building, 'it is one of the richest, the most beautiful and the most naturalistic of Akbar's buildings. . . . It is impossible to conceive anything so picturesque in outline or any building carved and ornamented to such an extent without the smallest approach to being overdone or in bad taste'.²⁵ Mariam's house is also small but perfect in simplicity of design. Perhaps the building was once profusely gilded and for this reason was known as Sunherā Makān or the golden house.

The other group of buildings in Fathpur Sikrī are religious ones. The most impressive of these is the grand Jāmi'Masjid which Fergusson describes as the 'glory' of Fathpur Sikrī, and 'hardly surpassed by any other building in India'.²⁶ This was planned on a grand scale hemmed in by a high wall and battlements. Of the three gateways only one remains. The open inner court has arcaded cloisters surmounted by single rows of

²⁵ *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. II, p. 294.

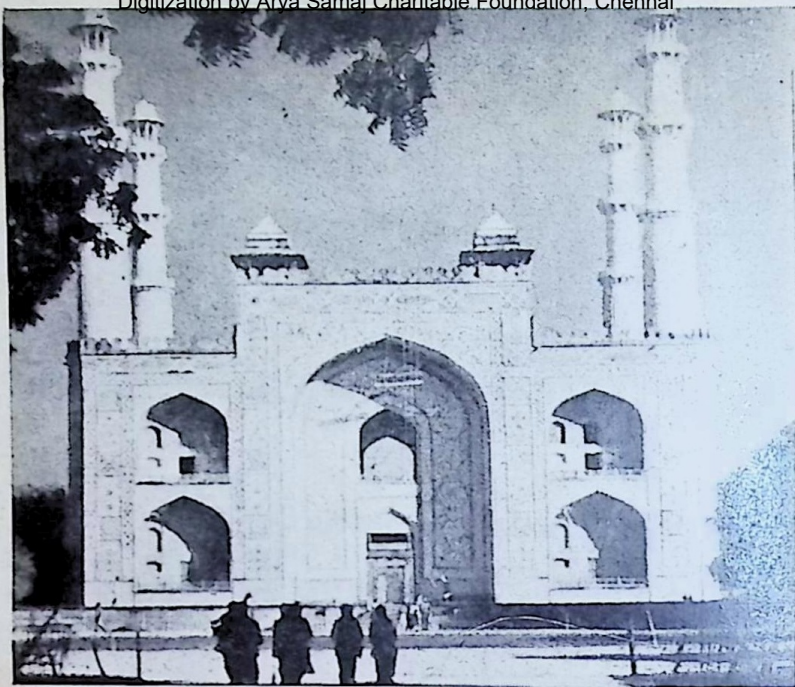
²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 294.



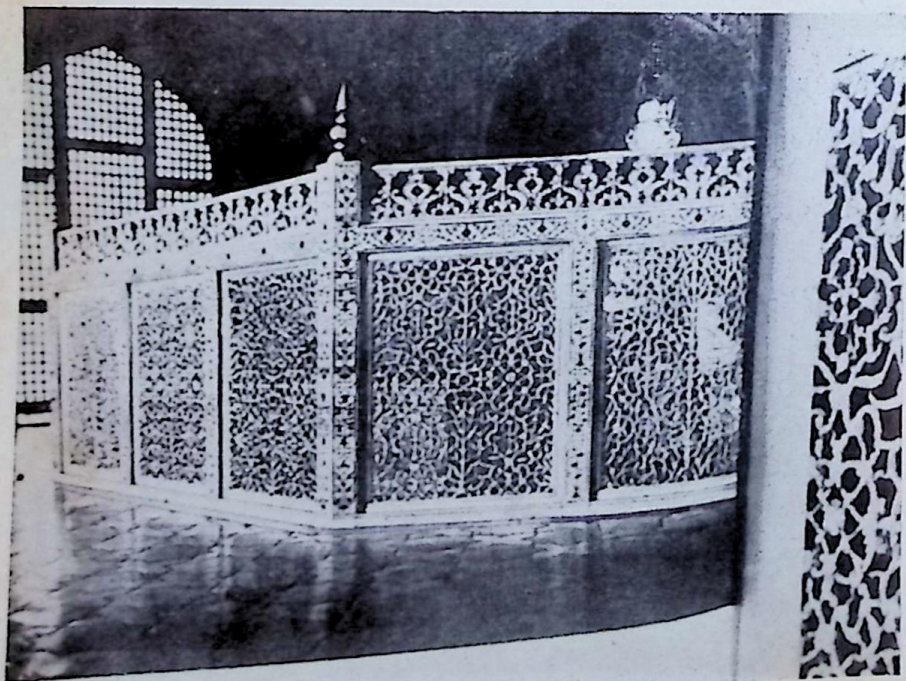
Mughal Painting



A Jaina Chakresvara with attendants
(12th century) Mt. Abu



Gateway to Akbar's tomb, Sikandara



Interior screen, Taj Mahal, Agra

light kiosks. It has a large sanctuary crowned by three domes of the flat Lodī type but tilted at the base. The central dome covers the prayer hall, the remaining portion of the roof being flat. Each dome has a finial. Light and beautiful kiosks line the entire length of the sanctuary roof. The facade is inlaid with white marble. The interior of the sanctuary has ornate mural decorations, particularly over the *miharāb* wall. After his victory in the Deccan Akbar got the Buland Darwāzā raised at the southern entrance of the mosque. This is a complete structure in itself with a large hall and a number of smaller apartments. It is an imposing monument with its immense bulk and towering height. The gateway is of red sandstone inlaid with white marble. The surface is carved. The gateway is cleverly constructed to diminish its size gradually bit by bit, till it ends up in a normal sized doorway. 'The Buland Darwāzā' says Percy Brown 'is a work of great force, especially when viewed from the ground below, as then it presents an appearance of aspiring and overwhelming strength without being weighty and pretentious'.²⁷

A later addition within the mosque was the tomb of Shaikh Salīm Chishtī on the north side of the quadrangle. This is a beautiful shrine in marble, square in plan, standing on an inlaid marble platform with a projecting portico southward. The cenotaph chamber has a single dome over it and is surrounded by a corridor enclosed in delicately patterned marble screens. The pillars supporting the portico are richly carved. The interior is as finely carved and fashioned as the outside. The walls have fascinating coloured patterns. The floor is inlaid with coloured marble. The wooden canopy over the cenotaph is inlaid with ebony and mother of pearl. To the east of the tomb of 'he Shaikh is the mausoleum of Islām Khān the saint's grandson. This is built of red sandstone. Though constructed in Jahāngīr's time it retains much of the style of Akbar.

Jahangir

Jahāngīr was more interested in painting than in building. In

27 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islāmic)*, p. 105.

architecture his age is a period of transition between the splendour, vigour and practical nature, of Akbar's buildings, and the luxurious exuberance of those of Shāh Jahān. Jahāngīr's first preoccupation in this field was to complete his father's tomb. Akbar had got work started on it but he died soon after. Jahāngīr took eight years to complete it, but could not do it quite according to his father's grand conception. The tomb lacks harmony and proportion despite the uniqueness of its design. The upper storeys do not go well with the sub-structure, though by themselves they are delicate and elegant.

Jahāngīr used white marble for his buildings instead of the red sandstone used hitherto. He loved colour and imparted it to his monuments by encaustic tiling and inlays of different hued precious stones. This certainly had a picturesque effect, but at the same time the inlay work could not give the substance and solidity to his architecture which marks Akbar's creations. The ornamentation was colourful but effeminate. Besides Akbar exploited indigenous talent and gave the Indian artisans direction. Jahāngīr was imbued with Persian ideas of luxury and grace and tried to artificially force them into his concepts. The result was his buildings had the grace of neither the Indian nor the Persian style. They also lacked the personal stamp of the monarch who with all his resources was in those days the master-builder. Nūr Jahān, Jahāngīr's talented wife, built her husband's tomb at Shāhdarā near Lahore. It is a one storeyed building with spacious gardens around it. Nūr Jahān also built at Āgrā a magnificent marble mausoleum for her father, I 'timād-ud-Daula. This is in two storeys with an octagonal tower surmounted by an open pavilion at each corner. It is the first notable building in white marble with rich ornamentation in *pietra dura*. Although the building lacks robustness, the beauty of its white marble and the rich colour of its decoration give it a decided charm. It marks a departure in architectural fashion and points to the brilliant baroque style which was evolved by Shāh Jahān. Another tomb made was that of 'Abdur-Rahīm Khān-i-Khānān. This is a copy of Humāyūn's tomb. Very little of it now remains.

Shah Jahan, the Golden Age

Shāh Jahān's reign marked the culmination of Mughal architecture. Although originality and nobility were not the virtues of his constructions, he certainly undertook a lot of building activity, and in the process managed to produce a few gems like the world famous Tāj. He reverted to the Persian style, and was very particular about the material he used for his buildings. He got his pure white delicately grained marble from the quarries of Makrana in Jodhpur or he would use stone or brick fabrics plastered smooth and polished a dazzling white. For decoration he used inlays of gems and precious stones. Obviously work executed with such fine material could hardly be second rate. He had all the money for his schemes and a huge army of workers paid and unpaid, and finally he had the interest and the initiative.

Shāh Jahān's main architectural achievements were (1) the constructions and replacements of stone structures of his predecessors in the palaces of Āgrā Lahore and at other places (2) the palace fortress of Lāl Qilā (Red Fort) at Delhi to where he transferred his capital from Āgrā, (3) the Jāmī' Masjids at Āgrā and Delhi and (4) the Tāj Mahal. The new buildings in the Lahore fort included the Dīwān-i-Ām, the Musamman Burz, the Shīsh Mahal, the Khwābāgh and others. In Āgrā fort the new constructions included the Dīwān-i-Ām, the Dīwān-i-Khās, the Khās Mahal and the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). The Dīwān-i-Ām at Āgrā is built in red sandstone, finely plastered with stucco to the smoothness of white marble except the floor and the ceiling. It has a flat roof. Near the back wall in the middle there is an alcove of white marble, where the emperor would sit. In front is a marble dais for the chief-minister. Behind the Dīwān-i-Ām is the Dīwān-i-Khās built entirely in marble. It has an open colonnade and behind it an enclosed hall. The walls are inlaid with red carnelians and precious stones. To the south the Khās Mahal stands on a marble terrace overlooking the Yamunā river. It has three elegant pavilions of white marble. The roof is flat with domed kiosks at the corners. There is an ornamental pool in front of the court. Below the court are built subterranean chambers which are

cooled by the peculiar manner in which they are placed. The Shish Mahal has small bits of mirrors set in gilt and coloured stucco all along the walls and ceiling. The Pearl Mosque stands on a height and commands a fine view of the palaces, pavilions and courts. It is of pure white marble with three graceful domes. At each corner there is an octagonal pavilion crowned by a cupola. A range of light kiosks line the parapet. Fergusson describes the Pearl Mosque as 'one of the purest and most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere'.²⁸

The Red Fort at Delhi was meant to serve as the emperor's residence. It is surrounded by a high wall of red sandstone with bastions having domed kiosks at intervals. There are two main gateways, the principal facing Chāndnī Chauk and the other the Lahore Gate. Inside there is a market place, servants' quarters, the *naubat khānā*, the royal residences, courts, pavilions and so forth. The Dīwān-i-Khās is highly ornamented. On one of the halls is inscribed 'If there be a paradise on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this'. Fergusson considers the Dīwān-i-Khās 'the most highly ornamented of all Shāh Jahān's buildings'.²⁹ The Rang Mahal was the king's private apartment. This is even more superbly ornamented. Perforated marble screens are used. The walls are embellished by small pieces of mirror. In the middle of it runs the Nahr-i-bihisht (Canal of Paradise), a marble water channel. There is an ornamental fountain and a basin designed as a large lotus flower. Originally the ceiling was ornamented with golden flower patterns. The Rang Mahal reflects the splendour and magnificence of the Mughal Court at its highest peak. It moved the chronicler to say 'In excellence and glory it surpasses the eight-sided throne of heaven, and in lustre and colour it is far superior to the palaces in the promised paradise'.³⁰

The grand Jāmī 'Masjid at Delhi is the most well known in India. It has a huge courtyard nearly a hundred metres square, and a lofty plinth. There are three bulbous domes of white marble and tall minarets. The plan is the usual orthodox one

28 *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. II p. 317.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 311.

30 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islāmic)*, p. 112.

with an open courtyard and ranges of cloisters on three sides with the prayer chamber on the west; but what makes it so impressive is the vast scale on which it has been designed and its harmonious unity. It was begun in 1664 and completed in 1658 when Shāh Jahān had ceased to reign. The mosque at Āgrā was built by Shāh Jahān to please his favourite daughter Jahānārā. It is not so impressive as the Delhi mosque but 'its merit depends on its pleasing proportions, the admirable distribution of the arches of its facade, the slender pinnacles intermingling with beautiful kiosks lining the parapet, and the zigzag ornament of white marble on the domes'.³¹

The Taj Mahal built as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtāz Mahal is Shāh Jahān's supreme creation. There are some who do not appreciate it much. Aldous Huxley, for example, thinks there is in it a 'poverty of imaginations'. On the other hand others eulogise it. Bayard Taylor speaks of it as a fabric of mist and moonshine with its great dome soaring up like a silvery bubble. Poet Rabīnderanath Tagore describes it as a tear-drop wrung from the sorrowing heart of the emperor. Looked at closely and critically imperfections might appear, as for example the lack of variety, the rigidity, and the effeminacy in execution. But viewed as a whole the Tāj Mahal is a miracle in conception. It wouldn't look so nice if it was not at the riverside and at that particular point of the river. It is built with loving care and dedication from the choicest material and in the most perfect setting. The chief architect of the Tāj was Ustād 'Isā, a citizen of Āgrā, helped by many Hindu craftsmen and artists. No Europeans took any part in its construction as some believe. Amanat Khān Shirāzī, the writer of the inscriptions came from Qandahār, and Isma 'il Khān Rūmī who made the dome was called from Constantinople. No originality can be claimed for the Tāj. The gateway as well as the four towers at the corners are based on the pattern of Akbar's tomb at Āgrā. The interior arrangement and decoration is a copy of Humāyūn's. The white marble is an idea borrowed from the mausoleum of I'timād-ud-Daula. But it contains some of the finest carvings of trees and

31 *The History and Culture of the [Indian People]*, ed. R.C. Majumdar, Bhavan, 1974, Vol. VII, p.793.

flowers. Though not so richly ornamented as the Pearl Mosque it is a noble monument comparable, as Fergusson says, 'with any creation of the same sort in the whole world'.

Situated on an elevated grounds on a bend of the river Yamunā, the Tāj Mahal has perfect visibility. The court is rectangular and the tomb is at one end. The tall entrance portal is impressive and frames the Tāj effectively. The facade of the tomb is richly ornamented by inscriptions from the *Qurānic* texts and by flowers arabesque and other patterns. The cenotaph chamber has a vaulted ceiling just below the central dome. Double perforated screens of white marble admit light inside. The cenotaphs of the emperor and the empress lie side by side marked off by an octagonal rail of trellised marble. The decoration both outside and in the tomb are superb. Forty-two kinds of precious stones have been used in the *pietra dura* works.³² These ornamentations have been very skilfully executed: 'The numerous shades of the rich kind of ornamentation are so elegantly and perfectly blended that even a close observation and scrutiny fail to discover the points of unison in any part, although a powerful microscope might reveal as many as seventy to ninety such pieces in the composition of a single small flower'.³³ Despite the river touching the side of the masonry foundation not the least damage has been caused over the centuries. The great dome also shows that the builders possessed high technical skill. The stately marble minarets at each corner are highly effective. It is not without reason that the Tāj is one of the world's greatest wonders.

(B) PAINTING

Apart from book illustration and portrait painting, the Mughal emperors were not much interested in this art. Muslim religion forbade the representation of living creatures. Aurangzib in his religious zeal, even destroyed the beautiful wall paintings in the

32 Art mosaic work in which hard semi-precious stones are set into a background of marble.

33 Journal of Indian Art 1885, p. 61 (quoted] in Bhavan's *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol, VII, p. 796).

palaces of Bijāpur. But Indian artists carried on the tradition of this art and a number of fine paintings were produced by them.

(1) Miniature Painting

(a) *The Jain School*

The Jain school is also known as the Gujārat school or the western style of art. The Jain kings of the Chālukyan dynasty patronised the illustration of Jain scriptures. Many of the rich Jain merchants also assisted by commissioning artists for this work. The earlier manuscripts were of palm leaf and did not provide a good enough material for painting. These bear pictures of deities against a coloured background, usually purple, red or blue. The names of the donors were given beneath. With the coming of paper the art of illustration assumed new dimensions. The borders of the pages were decorated with 'friezes of elephants swans and floral designs'. The text was written in gold and silver on a black or red background. Most of the books were religious but occasionally there were other kinds too as for example *Vasant Vilās* a romantic poem. The paintings have vigour but little grace, though one writer says 'for sheer exuberance, opulence and richness there is no painting in India which is its equal'.³⁴ According to another writer, however, the paintings lack realism: 'In the human forms the angularity of features, the pointed noses and large prospecting eyes, the broad chests and thin waists, with ultra-stylized landscapes and trees and the peculiar methods of depicting rivers and clouds, have all a decorative, perhaps originally symbolic, rather than a realistic character'.³⁵

(b) *Māṇḍu and Jaunpur*

Manuscripts of the *Kīlpasūtra* were illustrated by the artists here with local figures and costumes. A unique production was

³⁴ Moti Chandra, *Jain Miniatures*.

³⁵ J.V.S. Wilkinson, *Indian Art*.

a book on cookery, the *Nī'mat-nāma* written sometimes in the fifteenth century which contains attractive paintings from nature. The Persian influence is obvious in the book. Other miniatures were *Miftāh-u'I-Fuzalā* a dictionary of rare words produced at Māṇḍu and a Būstān manuscript painted by Hājī Mahmūd and the *Anwār-i-Suhaīlī*.

In Jaunpur the Sharqī rulers greatly encouraged art. Some of the illustrated books produced here are the *Hamzanāma*, the *Khamasa-i-Amīr Khusrav*, the *Sikandarnāma-yi-Bahri*, the *Mathnavi* and the *Shāhnāma*.

(c) Rājasthān and Orissa

A fine paper manuscript titled *Supasanahachariyam* with 37 illustrations, produced at Devakulavataka in Mewar points to Rājasthān being a prominent centre of miniature painting. The Krishna legend which was embodied in several manuscripts, contributed greatly to the evolution of Rājasthānī painting. One of the earliest miniatures in the Rājasthānī style is the *Āsavarī Rāginī* which represents the Rāginī charming the cobras and wild beasts with music. The drawing of the eyes and pattern of clothes and foliage recalls the Jain miniatures of Gujarāt. A somewhat later painting is the *Vibhāsa Rāginī* in which Kāmadeva, the Hindu love god is shown aiming an arrow at the cock whose crowing early in the morning announces the termination of the joyful night of love-making. The background of the painting is dark bluish-black. A thin band of white represents the dawn. The figure of the cock is abnormally large. There is directness of expression but hardly any grace. Nevertheless the art of these paintings faithfully represents Indian life and manners, as Dr. Coomaraswamy says: 'Sensitive, reticent and tender, it perfectly reflects the self-control and sweet serenity of Indian life, and the definitely theocratic and aristocratic organisation of Indian society. It lends itself to the utterance of serene passion and the expression of unmixed emotions'.³⁶

The Orissā school of art dates back to the first half of the

sixteenth century. The style of his school was somewhat different. The drawings were made by making incisions on palm leaves with the point of a stylus and rubbing ink or dry coal dust into them.

(d) *Paintings of South India*

The paintings in south Indian temples have been fortunately preserved as they escaped the iconoclastic zeal of the Muslim invaders. These are at various sites such as Sittanavasal, Tanjavur, Tripurantakam, Pillalamari, Vijayanagara, Lepakshi and other places. The paintings at Tanjavur are most remarkable. The entire ceiling and walls are decorated with them. The angular faces, sharp noses and deep set eyes of the figures remind one of west Indian painting. The paintings of Vijayanagara continue the Chola and Pandya tradition. The painting at Lepakshi (1538) depicts scenes from the Hindu scriptures, the *Mahābhārata Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Purāṇas*. These paintings have naturalness and warmth.

The Paintings of the Sultānate—the Transition Period

The Muslim Sultāns were not much interested in painting, and apart from a few scattered works like the historical poem of Amīr Khusrav Dihlavī and Firdausī's epic, there were no productions of note. A number of paintings were produced, however, in the provinces of the Sultānate and in other regions during this period. These miniatures have a red, blue, green, or yellow background. The figures of women painted in them have narrow waists, heavy breasts, large eyes, broad faces and pointed noses. They present a picture of carefree and gay abandon. The paintings belong to the *Laur Chandā-Chaurapañchāshikā* group dealing with loves of Kṛṣṇa, *Rāgamālā*, the popular tales of *Laur Chandā*, *Mirgāvat*, *Chaurapañchāshikā* and so forth. Other illustrated works were the *Mahāpurāṇa* (1540) and the *Āraṇyaka Parvan* (1516).

(2) PAINTINGS OF THE MUGHALS

Bihzad the miniature painter of the fifteenth century who flourished in the court of Khurasan influenced much of the early Mughal art. He brought about a synthesis of the traditions of Central Asia and Persia which was later adopted in India by his disciples who became the court painters of early Mughal rulers. These decorations were taken mainly from nature—like flowers, trees mountains etc.—and vividly reproduced.

(a) Humayun

During his stay at Persia when Sher Shāh had become paramount in India, Humāyūn came across Persian painters whom he took into his service. When he regained his empire he made them illustrate the famous work of *Dāstān-i-Amīr Hamza* or *Hamzanāma*. This had 1200 paintings drawn in vivid colours on linen pasted to the folios of the book. The work was completed by Akbar after Humāyūn's death. The paintings depict interiors of palaces and forts, pavilions, attendants, and men and women in a vivid manner and in bright splashes of colour. A few other miniatures of manuscripts like the *Āshīqa* (1568), *Anwār-i-Suhāilī* and *Tilasm* depict flowers, trees, animals and birds with Indian realism.

(b) Akbar

Akbar was a patron of painting, as of other art. He encouraged painters and rewarded good work. For example he assisted a poor artist, Daswant, son of a palanquin bearer, who he thought had merit. Akbar commissioned artists, including Daswant to illustrate the *Razmnāma*. Many other works including translations of Hindu scriptures like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Jog Bashisṭha*, were illustrated under Akbar's orders. Some of these were the *Akbar-nāma*, *Baburnāma*, *Anwar-i-Suhāilī*, *Jami'ut-Twārikh*, the *Dīwāns* of Hāfiz and Shāhī, *Tārikh-i-Ālfī*, *Nafahat-al-Uns* and the *Iyar-i-Dānish*.

(c) Jahangir

Even as Prince Salīm, Jahāngīr showed keen interest in painting. He started a new studio in Āgrā under Āqā Rizā, a Harati painter. Two manuscripts, the *Rājgunwār* (1602) and a collection of the Ghazls and *Rubā'īs* of Amīr Nazm-ud-dīn Hasan Dihlāwī (1602) were completed by him, and a pocket size *Dīwān* of Hāfiz was begun (completed in 1605 later by Jahāngīr). Albums (*mujaqq'as*) of Persian paintings, and European engravings of works of Akbar's time were compiled.

When Jahāngīr became emperor he tried to free painting from its confinement to manuscript illustration. He was keen to get portraits made of royalty and sent his leading artist Bishndās, all the way to Īrān to paint the Shah's portrait. Full length portraits were made of the emperor and the royal family. Portraits were painted showing the emperor going on the hunt, his travels, receptions, coronation, assemblies, birthday, weighing against gold and his participation in festivals. Indeed when later on the reins of the government passed practically into the hands of his clever and accomplished queen, Nūr Jahān, superb miniatures were painted to boost up the emperor's ego of imaginary situations. Thus he was shown as receiving and embracing Shāh 'Abbās of Īrān, whom he really never met, presiding over imaginary assemblies of holy men and emperors, and shooting at the severed head of his opponent Malik 'Ambar whom he failed to get the better of. Portraits, studies of nature, and copies of European engravings were produced.

The outstanding artists of Jahāngīr's age were Farrukh Beg, Daulat, Manohar, Bishndās, Ustād Mansūr and Abu-'l-Hasan. The most prominent of these were the last two. Mansūr became expert in drawings of rare animals, uncommon birds, unusual flowers and such rarities of nature. He had amazing powers of observation and unerring scientific skill. Abu-'l-Hasan's paintings are more sophisticated, his colour schemes effective and tasteful.

The Jesuit fathers brought with them European prints which had a great influence on Mughal art. Their designs and details were copied and painted in bright Mughal hues, giving rise to a hybrid kind of painting. An example is Basāwan's line drawing

study of Majnūn and the emaciated horse. Mughal painters began to copy European city scapes and landscapes and even occasional figures of European men and women in the background of their pictures.

(d) Shah Jahan

With Shāh Jahān we enter the last phase of Mughal painting ere its extinction in the reign of Aurangzīb. Jahāngīr's vanity was tickled by having portraits of himself being made in all conceivable and even inconceivable situations. Shāh Jahān was an even greater egoist. He loved to have himself painted as surrounded by angels carrying his crown from heaven. He is shown with a halo round his head, and in one painting Akbar, his grandfather, is shown as handing over the crown to him! Portrait painting was done with greater vigour than before. Dārā Shukoh presented his wife an album of pictures depicting poetic and religious discussions and also some graceful studies of young princes and beautiful girls. Illustrated manuscripts continued to be produced, such as a *Būstān*, a *Gulistān* and a *Mush-wa-Gorbeh*. The celebrated manuscript of *Shāhjahān-nāma* was brought out in 1657 in which there are some skilfully made masterpieces, as for example the Dancing Dervishes and Shāh Jahān witnessing a Sūfī dance. This monumental work may be taken to be the swan song of Mughal painting. The emperor continued to assemble albums containing calligraphic pictures as his father had done. Studies of birds and animals and the painting of portraits continued for some time. But decadence had set in, and the days of its glory were over. Beyond a few inconsequential miniatures, Aurangzīb's contribution was nothing and the art shifted to other more promising centres.

(3) HINDU PAINTING IN MUGHAL TIMES

Aurangzīb's aversion to painting as well as the invasion of Nādir Shāh which followed the disintegration of the Mughal empire led most of the artists to abandon their homes and seek out new opportunities. These Indian artists founded new

schools of painting which developed in styles different to that of the Mughal school.

(a) Pahari Painting

Rājput painting had two offshoots—the Rājasthānī school and the Pahārī. The former has already been discussed (see *Rājasthān and Orissā* under *Miniature Painting*). Pahārī painting developed in the hill states of the Punjāb particularly Basoli, Jammū, Nūrpur, Kāngra, Guler and Chamba. These artists took their inspiration from the devotional poetry of the saints of the *bhaktī* movement. The loves of Rādhā and Krishṇa is their main theme. Certain symbols were used by them to depict their love scenes. These were the lotus flower, black buck, peacock, hawk and twin pillars. The earliest miniature of the school is an illustration of Bhanudatta's *Rasamanjri* by Devidāsa who lived in the reign of the Basohli king Kripāl Pāl. The work is based on folklore, though influenced by the Mughal and Rājasthānī schools. The early Basohli paintings have many colours in them, particularly yellow orange blue and red. The faces of the men and women are typical, with sloping foreheads large almond shaped eyes and noses out of proportion to the rest of the features. Figures of women are shown wearing many ornaments visible from beneath their flimsy dresses. Trees, flowers, landscape and natural scenery are beautifully painted. The pictures are simple, lacking emotion and verve, but the colour scheme is excellent. The illustrations made in the *Gītagovinda* by Manaku, a women painter depict the excellences of the Pahārī style.

(b) Kangra School

This is one division of the Pahārī school, the other branch being the Jammu style. The approach of these artists is more realistic and their art more sober. The school was developed under the patronage of Rājā Saṁsār Chand (1774-1823). A typical example of this kind of painting is the *Hour of Cowdust* which shows Krishṇa returning with the cows to Vrindāvan welcomed by the *gopīs*. Another, Krishṇa overcoming Kāliya Nāga. The women

are depicted with grace and poise. Rowland says, 'The female figures are imbued with an attenuated, moving grace. Although conceived as types, they have an entirely individual quality of voluptuousness and attraction, imparted perhaps most of all by the rhythmic elegance of their pose and gestures'.³⁷ While many of these paintings are exquisitely coloured, some, like details of a Rās Līlā, are so devoid of it as to be merely drawings. Another masterpiece shows a young warrior kneeling with his shoulders resting on a shield. 'It has the purity of execution of a Greek vase'.³⁸

(c) Jammu School

The Jammū and Guler schools were founded when artists driven away by the sack of Nādir Shāh (1739) took shelter in the hill states. These artists were patronised by Rājā Ranjit Deo of Jammū. The prominent painters of the Jammū school were Nainsukh of Jasrota, Vajan Shāh and Didi. Their paintings were influenced by the Mughal style. Most of the pictures are about the daily life of Balwand Deo, the king's brother, who patronised these artists. Others paintings are from the *Rāmāyana*, as for example the Siege of Lañkā. Rowland says about Jammū art: 'There is an almost Persian quality in the delicacy of drawing and freshness of colouring which may be a reflexion of contemporary Mughal style. Although still essentially conceptual in their presentation, the seventeenth century artists of Jammū reveal a remarkable facility for animating single figures of men, monkeys and bears, and in integrating whole armies of these creatures with the entirely decorative conception of the landscape they inhabit'.³⁹ At the same time impact of the indigenous style can also be seen in the paintings.

The Guler style dealt mostly with the exploits of Krishṇa. It was similar to the Jammū style. The patron of the Guler painters was Rājā Goverdhan Chand (1744-70).

37 Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, Penguin, 1953, p. 193.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 194.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

(d) Rajput Paintings of Jaipur

The mural paintings of Jaipur executed in the eighteenth century are remarkable. An example of this is a coloured drawing showing Krishna dancing. The fish-shaped eyes, the bow of the eyebrows, and the faint blue-grey shading in the face are typical of Indian art through the centuries. It is this which makes Rowland say: 'This is perfect illustration of the timeless quality of Indian art. ...It is in the peculiar refinement of linear definition and in the simple and yet strangely transfigured face of the hero that this picture is specially expressive of Rājput civilisation'.⁴⁰

(C) SCULPTURE AND OTHER ARTS

(1) Sculpture

Before the coming of the Muslims we find the Hindu artists ornamenting the walls of temples and adorning them with graceful figures, particularly of women and *apsarās* in various poses. The works of art of Khajurāho, the wheel of the Konarak temple which represents the chariot of the Sun-god drawn by horses, the tower of victory (Vijaya Stambha) at Chitor, the temples built by the Hoysalas (1022-1342) particularly those of Kesava and Hoysalesvara, are undying testimony of the elegance and exuberance of Indian sculpture.

Bronze images of gods became very popular in this period. Small ones were installed in Hindu homes for offering daily ritual worship. The Belur sculptures (Madanakai images) have secular motifs and show women in various attitudes, like a girl making her toilet, a woman waiting for her lover or a damsel teaching a bird to talk.

In the thirteenth century the Muslim Sultāns caused a hiatus in the course of Indian sculpture by their iconoclastic zeal and their abhorrence of images which were prohibited by Islāmic religion. But they ornamented their buildings with floral and

calligraphic representations. Sculpture thus became confined to building activity.

The later Mughals, Akbar and Jahāngīr, were not averse to statues. Akbar ordered the making of statues of Jaimal and Patta, the brave defenders of Chitor, and got them installed at the main gates Āgrā. Jahāngīr commissioned the statues of Rānā Amar Singh of Udaipur and of his son, prince Karan. The Mughal emperors also patronised the art of ivory carving. Many graceful ivory miniatures were produced in the reign of Akbar and of Jahāngīr. But the orthodox emperor Shāh Jahān and his bigoted son and successor, Aurangzīb, wrecked the fine art of carving and sculpture.

(2) Dance

The main classical style of dances in India were Bhārata Nāṭyam (prevalent in Tanjore, Madurāi, and Madras and Belur), Kathākali (Kerala) and Kathak (Lucknow, Jaipur and Delhi and Odissi (Orissā). These dances were meant to present particular moods by gesture and facial expression. Many of them portrayed incidents from the scriptures or were based on the Krishṇa legend.

(A) Bhārata Nāṭyam

Bhārata Nāṭyam is the Indian term for devotional ritual dance. This was used chiefly in the worship of Āditi or Shaktī as the Great Mother and later of Shiva and Naṭarāja. The rules for the ritual of the dance were codified probably in the eighth century B.C. in the *Bhārata-nāṭya-shāstras* and later referred to in the *Mahābhārata*. A class of women known as *devadāsīs* dedicated themselves as temple dancers. A modified form of the dance which adopted some Muslim characteristics like *salamu* and *tillana* continued to be popular in the courts of the Sultāns of the Deccan. Despite Muslim apathy to this noble art a variety of dance drama associated with the life of Krishṇa continued to flourish among the Hindus of Kulchipudi.

(b) *Kathākālī*

Unlike the solemn Bhārata Nāṭyam, which was essentially a temple dance, Kathākālī presents essentially plays for the people. The term means 'story play'. In Bengal the *kathak* is an interpreter of the *Purāṇa* in a scholarly manner. Kathākālī is the Indian miracle play. Its emphasis is on vigour, movement and gesture in contrast with the slow solemn ritual of Bhārata Nāṭyam. According to legend Krishṇa himself appeared to Zamorin, a native of Calicut, who then wrote *Krishṇapadi* a drama based on the god's exploits. The play was performed for eight nights together, and excited the jealousy of the ruler of Koṭṭarakkara who in reply wrote a play on Rāma. The Kathākālī tradition continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteen centuries.

(c) *Kathak*

The *kathak* became very popular in medieval India. The *kathaks* were a community of dancers and musicians who roamed all over the countryside reciting episodes from the *Rāmāyṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* through the medium of music and dance. In the beginning the dance was not classical but popular and had few technicalities. Incidents from sacred lore were just narrated by one musician accompanied by one or two others. Vaishṇava mysticism transformed it into a major classical dance fettered with techniques laid down in the *Bhārata-nāṭya shāstras*.

(d) *Court Dances*

These religious dances could hardly be expected to win the approbation of the early Muslim rulers who, for their entertainment, preferred dancers from Persia and Central Asia. But, as in other directions, this led to an amalgamation of the two cultures, each adopting the virtues of the other. A complete synthesis was reached by the time Akbar came to the Mughal throne, and his broad eclecticism doubtless helped accomplishing this. The *kathak* dancers adopted Persian costumes. The themes became secular. This was all well till the Mughals

maintained the decorum of their courts. But once the empire declined the court dances degenerated into sensual exhibition and lascivious entertainment.

(3) Music

Music begins with the *Sāma Veda*. Temples were centres of religious music, and Hindu kings patronised it. Orthodox Muslims were not in favour of music as it was prohibited by their religion. None the less the Delhi Sultāns like Balban, Jalāl-ud-dīn, 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī and Muhammad Tughluq, held music concerts. Balban's son was a patron of Amīr Khusrav, one of the greatest musicians then living. Barnī refers to several musical shows which took place in the reign of Kaiqubād and Jalāl-ud-dīn (1290-96). Speaking of the charm of music as practised by well known musicians of those days Barnī say: 'Even the birds came to listen to their melodies, and those who listened became delirious with delight'.

Amīr Khusrav invented many new *rāgas*. He is credited with the *Khayāl* which is an adaptation of the *dhrupad rāga*. He evolved the *qawwalī* which, in time to come, gained great popularity.

The *bhaktī* movement gave a great impetus to music by the introduction of devotional songs. Kabīr, Nānāk, Mīra Bāi Sūrdāsa, Tulsī, Chaitanya, Nāmadeva, Tukarāma and other saints popularised this mode of music. The Sūfī saints particularly the Chishtīs found expression of their mystic faith through the medium of music.

Many works on Indian music appeared in the south.⁴¹ The Nāyaka rulers of Tanjore, particularly Raghunath Nāyaka, patronised Karnāṭka music. The renowned musician Venkaṭā-makhin (1650) devised a system of seventy-two *mela-rāgas* which comprised all the existing *rāgas*. Other prominent musicians of the south were Harīdāsa Purandaradāsa, Pītamba, Tallapak-kams, Ksetrajña and Tanappāchārya.

41 *Sangitā-ratnākara* (13 Cent.), *Sangīt. Samayasara* (13 Cent.), *Sangītarāya* (15 Cent.), *Sangīta-Siromanī* (15 Cent.), *Sangīta-Kaumudī* and *Sangīta-Nārayāna* (16-18 Cent)

Despite Aurangzīb's averseness to music exemplified by the oft-told incident in which he ordered Music to be buried so deep that it would arise never, a few works like *Rūg Darpan* and *Muraqqa-i-Dillī* show that the art was not quite extinct even in his reign. In fact the Mughals were on the whole keen patrons of it. Bābur was fond of music and himself wrote verses. Humāyūn fixed two days in the week for listening to musicians. When he captured Māṇḍu in 1535 and ordered a general massacre, he discovered a musician among the inhabitants of the name of Bachchu. He not only spared him but made him his court musician. The Sūr kings continued to patronise music. A musician of the name of Bhagat got a *mansab* of 10,000 from the king Ādil Shāh. Akbar was a great lover of music. Abu-'l-Fazl says 'His majesty pays much attention to music and is the patron of all who practise this enchanting art. There are numerous musicians at the court, Hindus, Īrānīs, Tūrānīs, Kāshmirīs, both men and women. The court musicians are arranged in seven divisions, one for each day of the week'. A number of famous musicians were honoured in his court, as for example Bāz Bahādur, whom the emperor gave a *mansab* of 1,000, Tānsen, Bābā Rāma Dās, Sūr Dās, and Baujā Bāwlā. Tānsen whose original name was Rāmtanu Pāṇḍe was presented two *lakhs* of rupees by Akbar when he first sang in his court. Abu-'l-Fazl says of the musician 'A singer like him has not been known in India for the last thousands years'.

Jahāngīr, himself the author of many Hindi songs, maintained a large number of musicians in his court. Finch says 'Many hundred of musicians and dancing girls attended there day and night, yet as their several turns—every seventh day, that they may be ready when the king or his women shall please to call any of them to sing or dance in his *mahal*, he was giving to every one of them a stipend according to their worth'.

Shāh Jahān was very fond of music, and while listening to his court musicians, would at times also join them in singing himself. 'His voice was so melodious' says J.N. Sarkar, 'that many pure-souled Sūfīs and holy men with hearts withdrawn from the world who attended these evening assemblies lost their senses in the ecstasy produced by his singing'. Vocal and instrumental music was given every day in the *Dīwān-i-Khās*. On

one occasion Shāh Jahān was so much pleased with the performance of one of his musicians, of the name of Jagannath, that he had him weighed against gold and presented it to him as a reward.

With Aurangzīb music was on the decline, though not wholly stamped out. Hindu music had started as being devotional and religious. But the music patronised by Mughal courts no longer remained so. In time it became degraded and the main performers were dancing girls whose job was more to preserve the romantic mood of the emperors and other revellers, rather than maintain the nobility of the art. The educated middle class considered music to be a luxury indulged in by nobles and the privileged people rather than an art. Its teaching was discouraged. A distinction gradually arose between the music *ustāds* (classical music) and the folk music of the people.

Education and Literature

(A) EDUCATION

As in other spheres of Indian culture, education was greatly disrupted by the advent of Islām. Many Hindu centres of learning such as Taxilā, Nālanda and Vikramshīla perished. Monasteries and temples which served as centres of learning were destroyed. Teachers and men of learning fled to the powerful Hindu kingdoms to escape persecution. Somehow the education institutions continued under their patronage. It was only a long time after that education could again be put back on its pedestal with the enlightened policy of some of the Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar and Jahāngīr.

The Hindu System of Education

To start with there were no public schools in Hindu India. Education was imparted by preceptors to individual students who lived in the place where the teacher lived, served him in whatever manner they could, and went back after completing their courses of study. The initiation to education followed a formal ceremony known as *upanayāna*, (corresponding to the *maktāb* among Muslims). Emphasis was placed on practical education and character building apart from learning, and perfect obedience was expected on the part of the pupil.

(a) *Primary Education*

Primary schools or *pāṭshālās* were attached to temples. All villagers collectively contributed to the maintenance of village schools. Sanskrit, grammar and logic, were taught. Sometimes schools were maintained out of endowments.

(b) *Higher Education*

For higher education there were *ṭols* or *chaupaṭīs*. The system of individual teachers undertaking to impart education to residential students, however continued. Generally education started at the age of five. In the *ṭols* the subjects taught were Sanskrit language and literature, the *Purāṇas* and *Vedas*, philosophy, medicine, astrology, astronomy and mathematics. Akbar favoured the teaching of regional languages also. Students were highly proficient in mathematics, astronomy and meteorology, and could predict accurately the eclipses and give reasonably correct weather reports.

(c) *Method of Teaching and Duration of Courses*

The main idea of imparting education was to build personality, character, self-reliance, restraints, austerity and discipline. Knowledge was a gift, not something which was purchased. Many teachers charged no fees and depended for subsistence on generous merchants and nobles who were always happy to maintain them. The students respected their teachers and they in their turn treated them as they would their own sons. Thus education was not commercial as it has now become, but something ennobled with hard work, devotion and spirituality. The method of teaching was at first crude. The children learnt by rote. They wrote the letters of the alphabet and figures on wooden boards, or just in the dust with their fingers. Later on, however, the students were taught to write on palm leaves with reeds or bamboo twigs. Classes were often held in the open under a tree.

Although there were no regular examinations, the ability of the student was often judged by questioning him in a kind of

interview. If a student was bright enough he got accelerated promotion. Sometimes the tests were queer, as in Mithilā a needle was passed through a manuscript and the candidate was asked to guess the number of the page it pierced last! Titles like *upādhāya*, *mahāmahaupādhyāya*, *saryantrī* and so forth were awarded at the end of the courses of study.

(d) Centres of Learning

Sacred cities, shrines, temples and monasteries formed the main places of learning. The main centres were Banāras Nadiā or Navadvīpa (Bengal) Mithilā (Bihār), Prayāga, Ayodhyā, Srinagar, Tirhut, Thatta, Multān, Kāmarūpa and Sirhind. Of these Banaras, Nadiā and Mithilā were most prominent.

At first the Muslim conquest completely upset the established educational pattern of Banāras, but by the time of the Mughals, scholars began to flock again to this great city of learning. Here flourished Nanda Paṇḍit author of *Dattaka-Mīmāṃsā*, Khandarāya author of *Parasurāma-Prakāsa*, Sankarabhaṭṭa who wrote among other works, *Davitanernya Vratamaynkha*, Gaṅgābhaṭṭa author of *Sisavishṇu Chintāmaṇī* and commentator of *Mīmāṃsā*, and the author of *Rasamañjarī Parimālā*. Kabīr and Tulsīdāsa carried on their literary activity at Banāras. Jai Singh established a college here, and foreign travellers mention the scholarly debates and seminars held in the sacred city. In the preface to his work, *Sirr-i-Akbar*, Darā Shukoh refers to Banāras as the main centre of learning of the Hindus.

Nadia rose into prominence after the destruction of the universities of Nālanda and Vikramashīla. There were as many as a hundred and fifty teachers here and over a thousand students. High standards of scholarship were maintained. A number of subjects were taught, including astronomy, philosophy and the humanities.

Mithilā, in Bihār, was particularly famed for logic, which was a specialised study there. One of its pupils Raghunandana-dāsa Rāi performed *dig-vijaya* at the instance of Akbar, and so delighted the emperor that he gave the scholar the town of Mithilā as a gift. Rāi, in turn, gifted it to his revered teacher Mahesh Thākur.

The teaching of Sanskrit was carried on in Srinagar. Multān was a centre for the study of astronomy, astrology, mathematics and other sciences. Sāqī mentions it as a centre of Hindu learning in his *Ma'āsir-i-Ālamgirī*. The ayurvedic system of Hindu medicine was taught at Sirhind. Theology, politics and philosophy were the main subjects in the four hundred odd colleges at Thāṭṭā. Madurai, in the south, had over ten thousand students. Kāmarūpa was a resort for scholars, many of whom took part in debates at Nālanda. The rājās of Keralā were great patrons of military education. Other centres of learning were Kāñchipuram, Aḍayapalam, Viṭoor, Virnicipuram and Vepu in north Arcot.

The Muslim System of Education

The system of education in Muslim institutions bears close resemblance to that of the Hindus except in the curriculum.

(a) Primary Education

The *maktabs* imparted elementary education. These were usually attached to mosques, but sometimes to private houses. Boys were admitted usually at the age of four or five when the bismillah or *maktab* ceremony was performed.

(b) Higher Education

The secondary schools or colleges of higher learning were known as *madrasās*. These were sometimes attached to the city's chief mosque. The exact number of these *madrasās* is not known, though there are some scattered references in the biographies of the scholars of the age. Jahāngīr repaired those *madrasās* which had been in ruins for long. He utilised property escheated to the Crown for building and repairing them. The Delhi Sultāns built a number of these. One built by Sultān Firūz Shāh at Hauz-i-Khās was a spacious double-storeyed building surrounded by a beautiful garden. There were large lecture rooms, guest houses and hostels for teachers and students. Shāh Jahān built a *madrasā* on the south of the Jāmi' Masjid.

Methods of Teaching and Courses of Study

Muslim education was religious in nature, and though other subjects were taught, its main purpose was the inculcating of Islāmic religion and philosophy. Muslims often attended Hindu institutions to specialise in difficult sciences like astronomy, mathematics and medicine. The new entrant in the *maktab* learnt the letters of the alphabet from a *maluvī*. Grammar was then taught followed by the text of the *Qurān* which all the pupils had to learn by heart. Lessons in Arabic and Persian were given. Simple arithmetic was taught. Great importance was given to calligraphy. In higher education the emphasis seems to be on the humanities and languages rather than on the sciences. Jurisprudence, theology, the traditions of the Prophet, medicine, rhetoric, syntax, etymology, literature logic and philosophy, were the main subjects. Humāyūn laid stress on the study of mathematics, astronomy and geography in the *madrasās* built by him. Akbar issued a royal order making mathematics and astronomy compulsory subjects. Aurangzib pulled up his instructor for wasting time on Arabic metaphysics instead of imparting knowledge of geography and politics. Despite this, however, the sciences, particularly geography, remained neglected.

There were no examinations. When the teacher was convinced that the student was fit for promotion, it was given. After completion of the studies the ceremony of *dastarbandī* took place in which the teacher tied a turban round the pupil's head. Sometimes certificates and diplomas were awarded to distinguished students.

Teaching was by memorisation. The average number of pupils per teacher were from five to fifteen. Classes were held in the morning and evening with an interval in between. No fees were charged. Despite offerings made by the students to their teachers and government assistance, most of the educationalists led miserable lives, unless they could win royal favour. But teachers were greatly respected and emphasis was on discipline and morality.

Centres of Muslim Learning

In the Sultānate period there were *madrasās* in Multan, Sind, Lahore and Delhi. With the coming of the Mughals Agrā, Delhi, Jaunpur, Gujarāt, Lahore, Siālkot and other towns became prominent as centres of education. Akbar established a big college at Āgrā and invited scholars from Shirāz to teach there. The *madrasās* of Maulānā 'Alā-ud-dīn Lārī and Sayyid Rafi-ud-din Safawī were famous. Numerous scholars held classes in their own houses at Delhi. Among the famous institutions of that city were Humāyūn's Madrasā, Maham Anaga's Khair-ul-Manzil and Shāh Jahān's Imperial College near Jāmi' Masjid. Jaunpur, which was known as the Shirāz of India, developed as an educational centre during the reign of Ibrahīm Sharqī (1401-40). Lahore attracted many scholars. Siālkot, where paper was manufactured, also grew in importance. Many scholars settled down in Kāshnīr. Other centres of learning were Fathehpur Sikrī, Bayāna, Lucknow, Ajmer, Gwālīor, Thāneshwar, Sirhind, Burhānpur Thāṭṭa, Narnaul and Sambhal.

The Education of Women

There seem to have been no separate schools for women, though in their childhood girls and boys attended school together. Grown up girls were taught by their parents. Those who could afford it appointed tutors for them.

Women of the higher classes were mostly educated, and some of them were accomplished scholars. Among these can be counted Mīrābāī, the poetess, Ratnāvalī wife of Pūrana Malla, Zebunnisā and Zīnatunnisā, daughters of Aurangzīb, Rūpmatī wife of Bāz Bahadur and Hatī Vidyālankara who became a teacher in Bengal. *Mahilā-mriduvani*, a prominent work of this period mentions thirty-five women who distinguished themselves in the literary sphere. In general however even Mughal princesses were not much adept in scholarship. After their marriage they spent most of their time in managing the royal household, and had little time for literary pursuit or inclination towards it. Gulbadan Begum's letters to her husband were so badly written that he could hardly decipher them. Her *Humāyūn-nāma*

is, according to Banerjī, full of 'spelling mistakes and clumsy sentences.' The average middle class woman, however, had enough education to be able to read and understand the scriptures—the *Qurān* for Muslim women and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Gīta* and other scriptures for Hindus. Many women of the south knew Sanskrit as Vico testifies. Particular stress was laid on the education of widows. Women of the lower classes such as housemaids, attendants and wives of peasants were largely illiterate.

Books and Libraries

Books

Paper was in use in India long before the coming of the Mughals. Sialkot was famous for its Mānsinghī and silk paper, and excellent paper was manufactured at Shāhzudpur. Printing was not in vogue¹ and so manuscripts were handwritten by skilful calligraphists with sticks of reed mended like a quill.² Penmanship was considered to be a fine art. The most important style of writing was the *naskh* and the *nastāliq*. Bābur used a new style known as *Khat-i-Bāburī* in which he transcribed the *Qurān*.

Being laboriously written by hand and richly decorated and bound, each masterpiece was almost an art treasure. Humāyūn purchased a copy of the *Tuhfāt-us-Salātin* for two thousand and five hundred rupees. Jahāngir bought a copy of *Yūsuf-Zulaikhā* for the fabulous sum of a thousand gold *mohurs*. But ordinary books were available at reasonable prices to the common reader. Badāūnī says: 'There is no street or market (in the Imperial capital) where the booksellers do not stand at roadsides selling copies of the *dīwāns* of the poets Shirāz and Husain Sanai, and both Persians and Indians buy them.'³ Sanskrit manuscripts were rare and difficult to get. They were in the possession of institutions which prohibited their borrowing, or in rare cases with

1 Printing was first done by the Jesuits in the presses at Goā and Rachol about the middle of the sixteenth century.

2 J. Ovington, *A Voyage to Surāt in the Year 1689*, London, p. 249.

3 *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh* (Trans. Ranking), Vol. III, p. 285.

individual scholars who were fortunate enough to acquire a copy.

Libraries

The Imperial library at Delhi was established by Jalāl-ud-dīn Khaljī. Amir Khusrav was appointed its librarian. Like the Muslim rulers of the Sultānate, Hindu chiefs also maintained their own libraries, generally housed in temples. There was an excellent library containing 1,300 manuscripts in the temple of Jwalāmukhī at Nagarkōṭ. After the conquest of Nagarkōṭ, Firūz invited scholars for translating some of these books. The nobles and other men of standing had their individual libraries. Ghāzi Khān a courtier of Ibrāhīm Lodī had a personal library which Bābur took over in 1525. He mentions this in the *Tūzūk-i-Bāburī*: 'On Monday, while walking in the fort, I reached the Ghāzi Khān library'. Shaikh Su'dullah, a scholar living in the age of the Lodis owned a large and valuable library. Mahmūd Beghara (1458-1511) had a good library which he placed in the charge of Sayyid Usmān.

The Mughal emperors were fond of books. Bābur and Humāyūn had their personal libraries. Humāyūn maintained his library in an upper room of the Khana-i-Sa'dat. The books in it included portfolios (*Juzdān*) picture books, and fine specimens of calligraphy. Akbar had a passion for good books. About the library maintained by him Abu-'l-Fazl writes: 'His majesty's library is divided into several parts; some of the books are kept within, and some without the harem ... Experienced people bring them daily and read them before his majesty, who hears every book from the beginning to the end. At whatever page the readers daily stop, his majesty makes with his own pen a sign, according to the number of pages; and rewards the readers with presents of cash either in gold or silver according to the number of leaves read out by them. Among books of renown, there are no historical facts of the past ages or curiosities of science, or interesting points of philosophy with which his majesty, a leader of important sages, is not acquainted. He does not get tired of learning a book over again but listens to the reading

of it with more interest.”⁴ Akbar’s library was very systematic. An officer known as the *nizām* acted as chief librarian. He was assisted by a *muhtamīm* and several assistants. Books were entered in registers subject-wise. Copyists, translators, scribes and readers who corrected manuscripts (*muqābalānavīs*) were employed. At Akbar’s death the Imperial library contained 24,000 illustrated and finely bound volumes. Individual libraries also existed on a large scale. Abdur Rahim Khān-i-Khanān had ninety-five officials employed in his library including a librarian, painters, book-binders, scribes and so forth. Shaikh Faizī’s library had 4,600 books. Mahmūd Gawān left behind a huge library of 35,000 volumes. Jahāngīr had a large staff of copyists in the Imperial library. Nūr Jahān maintained her own private library.

Hindus also maintained big libraries containing books on various topics. Maharājā Chhika Deva Rāya of Mysore (1672-1704) collected the rarest Sanskrit and historical works in his library which unfortunately was destroyed by Tipū Sultān. Maharājā Sawāi Jai Singh of Jaipur had a valuable library containing a number of astronomical works. Bernier who visited the library of the university at Banāras saw a large hall ‘entirely filled with rare Sanskrit manuscripts’.⁵ Thavenot writes ‘they have many ancient books ‘all in verse of which they are great lovers’.⁶ The Muslims, however, later destroyed all these precious libraries.

(B) LITERATURE

The literary output in the period following the decline of the Hindu kingdoms up to the end of the Mughal empire, was not only vast but also varied. Apart from Sanskrit and Hindi, and the new languages introduced by Muslim culture namely Arabic Urdū and Persian, there was progress in the regional languages also

4 *‘Āin-i-Akbarī* (Trans. Blochman) Vol. I, pp. 109-110.

5 *Oriental Institute of Research Journal*, December 1945 and Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 335.

6 *Travels into the Levant*, Vol. 3, Ch. 1, p. 90.

like Assamese, Bengālī, Gujarātī, Marāṭhī, Oṛiyā, Panjābī, Tamil, Telugu, Kannāḍa and Malayālam.

(1) Sanskrit

The coming of the Muslims caused a set back in the progress of Sanskrit literature. Though some of the Mughal emperors, like Akbar, were for tolerance and others, like Shāh Jahān, extended their patronage to Sanskrit scholars, in general the atmosphere was of tension and uncertainty, a condition least favourable to the development of the language. It was only in the south that the Hindu rulers and chiefs of small principalities, like the Nāyaks of Tanjore, the chiefs of Travancore and Cochin and the Zamorins of Calicut, maintained some progress.

(i) POETRY

(a) *Kāvya Literature*: Among the greater *kāvyas* (long poems) Raghunātha Nāyaka and his court poets made a notable contribution, Raghunātha himself authoring quite a few of them.⁷ Madhuravāṇī a talented woman in Raghunātha's court wrote a *kāvya* on the *Rāmāyaṇa* in fourteen cantos, at the king's instance. A minister of the Nāyakas of Gingee, Shrinivāsa Dīkshita, wrote as many as sixty *kāvyas*, among them one, entitled *Shitikanṭhavijaya*, dealing with the well known mythological incident of the Churning of the Ocean. His son, Rājachūḍāmaṇi Dīkshita, a Mīmāṃsā scholar, wrote about the marriage of Krishṇa and Rukmiṇī in ten cantos. Another scholar minister was Nilakanṭha Dīkshita who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century. Two of his works are famous, namely *Shivalīlārṇava* and *Gaṅgāvataraṇa*. The former is a *mahākāvya* in twenty-two cantos about the exploits of Shiva Hālasyaṇātha. The other one tells the story of Bhagīratha's penance and the descent of the holy Gaṅgā on the earth. Chakrakavi and Veṅkaṭeśha wrote *kāvyas* on the Rāma story.⁸ Devotional *kāvyas* on praise of the god Nārāyaṇa

⁷ These are *Achyutarābhyudaya*, *Rāmāyaṇa-sāra-sāṅgraha* *Gajendramoksha*, *Nalābhyudaya*, *Pārijātaḥaraṇa* and *Rukmiṇi-krishṇa-vivāha*.

⁸ *Jānakī pariṇaya* of Chakrakavi and *Ramachandrodaya* of Veṅkaṭeśha.

were written by Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭatīri (*Nārāyaṇīyam*) and Vādirāja (*Rukmiṇīsha-Vijaya*).

Another form of *kāvya* was known as *slēsha-kāvya*. This employed even greater artificialities than the *mahākāvyas* afore-said, inasmuch as words were used in them which could be interpreted to have two, three, and sometimes even five, different meanings. Works of this nature were the *Yādava-Rāghavīya* of Venkaṭādhvarin which tells the story of Rāma and Krishṇa; the *Naishadha-pārijāta* of Krishṇadhvarin which tells the story of Krishṇa and Nala; *Rāghava-Yādava-Pāṇḍavīya* which narrates the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhāgavata* and *Mahābhārata*; and the *Pañchakalyāṇa-champū* of Chidambara which accomplishes the seemingly impossible task of describing the marriages of Rāma, Krishṇa, Viṣṇu, Shiva and Subrahmaṇya, all with one text.

Other *kāvya* writers were Tirumalamba author of *Varadāmbikā-pariṇaya-champū*; Mitramishra who wrote *Ānanda-champū* dealing with the story of Krishṇa; and Venkaṭādhvarin the author of four works namely *Hastigiri-champū* in praise of Varadarā; *Uttara-champū*, based on the *uttarakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*; *Shrinivāsa-champū* in praise of Venkaṭeśhvara; and *Vishva-quṇadarsha-champū* which depicts the journey of two demigods through the sky in a *vimāna* one seeing the good side of things and the other the bad side.

(b) *Smaller Poems*: Many poems were written on the model of the *Gītā-gōvinda* of Jayadeva and Kālidāsa's *Meghadūt*. Examples of the former type are Ananta-nārāyaṇa's *Gītashaṅkara*, and the *Krishṇagīti* written by Mānaveda the Zamorin king (1652). Poems modelled on the *Meghdūta* were mostly produced in Keralā as for example *Subaga-sandesda* written by Rāmavarman, ruler of Quilon, and Vāsudeva's *Bhriṅgar*. The most outstanding lyric poet of the age was Jagannātha Paṇḍitrāja who lived in the Āndhra region. He wrote the *Gaṅgālahari* in praise of river Gaṅgā, the *Amṛitalahari* in praise of the Yamunā, *Karuṇālaharī* in adoration of the god Viṣṇu, *Sudhālaharī* for the Sun-god and *Lakshmīlaharī* in praise of the goddess Lakshmī.

(ii) DRAMA

The plays written fall under four main classes—mythological, historical, allegorical and erotic. The mythological plays use scriptural themes as the Krishna legend, the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and incidents from the *Mahābhārata*. The main writers were—plays on the Krishna story; Shesh-Krishna's *Kaṁsavadha* and Kumāra Tātachārya's *Parijāta-haraṇa*—plays based on the *Rāmāyaṇa*; Mahadeva's *Adbutadarpaṇa* in which Rāma sees what is happening in Laṅkā with the help of a magic mirror, and Ramabhadra Dikshita's *Jānakīpriṇāa*—plays on the *Mahābhārata* theme; Shrīnivāsa Dikshita's *Bhaim-pariṇaya* and Nilakanṭha's *Nalacharita-Nāṭaka* dealing with the story of Nala; *Subhadra-pariṇaya* of Nalla Dikshita, King Shāhji's *Chandra-shekhara-vilāsa*, and Vijayīndratīrtha's *Subadrā-Dhanañjaya* all dealing with the marriage of Arjuna and Subhadra.

There are few historical plays. Chokkanātha wrote one based on the marriage of Shāhji, his patron, with Kāntimatī (*Kāntimatī-pariṇaya*), and another, *Seventikā-pariṇaya* on the marriage of Basavarājā with Seventikā daughter of a Malabar prince.

Among allegorical plays Kavikarṇapuar's *Chaitanyā-chandrodaya* is about Chaitanya's life, *Dharmavijaya* of Bhūdeva Shukla depicts the advantages of spiritual life through character personified as Vice and Virtue and the *Amritodaya* of Gokulānatha shows the soul's progress. Shrīnivāsa Dikshita also wrote an allegorical play entitled *Bhāvanā-purushottama*.

Erotic plays (called *beānas*) were usually in one act. The plays of this category are, Rājachūdāmaṇi Dikshita's *Shrinagāra-Sarvasa*, Nalla Dikshita's play of the same name, the *Shrinagar-atilaka* of Rāmabhadra Dikshita and Chokkanātha's *Rasavilāsa*.

(iii) WORKS ON POETICS

A number of books were written on poetics, grammar, music and philosophy. The main writers on poetics were Appayya Dikshita, Jagannatha Paṇḍita, Gangādhara Kavīndra, Rāmānanda, Shrīnivāsa Dikshita and his son Rājachūdāmaṇi Dikshita.

both writers on *alaṅkāra* (embellishment in poetry) and Raghunāthamanohara.⁹

(iv) GRAMMAR

In works on grammar Bhaṭṭoji Dīkshita was the most renowned writer. He wrote a very popular elucidation of Pāṇini's work, namely *Siddhānta-kaumudī* which is to Pāṇini what Bradley might be for Shakespeare. He also wrote another commentary known as *Shabdakaustubhu*. Nāgoji Dīkshita was another prominent grammarian. Nārāyaṇa too wrote a commentary on Pāṇini which was entitled *Prakriyāsarvasva*, besides a work on the *Mīmāṃsā* known as *Mānamēyodāya*.

(v) PHILOSOPHY

Expounders of the Advaita school of Indian philosophy were Appayya Dīkshita and Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. The more important works of Appayya are *Shivārkaṇḍīpikā* and *Chaturmatasāra-saṅgraha*. Madhusūdana wrote the *Advaita-siddhānt*. Akbar was impressed by his scholarship.

Dvaita philosophy was interpreted by Vyāsarāya (1478-1539) who was the *rājā-gurū* of Krishnadevarāya king of Vijayanagara. His works are collectively known as *Vyāsatrayī*. His disciple Vijayindratīrtha wrote a number of commentaries and treatise. Other writers like Satyanāthayati and Rāghavēndratīrtha also wrote on Dvaita philosophy.

(vi) INSCRIPTIONS

Many inscriptions on stone and copper-plates written in fine poetry have been found relating to this period. Prominent are

9 Their books are Appayya Dīkshita (*Chitramīmāṃsā*, *Kulvalayānanda*, *Vṛttivartika I* and *Lakṣhaṇaratnāvalī*); Jagannātha (*Rasagaṅgādhara*, *Chitramīmāṃsā-Khaṇḍana*, and *Bhāminī-Vilāsa*); Geṅgadhara Kavindra (*Kāvyaḍākinī* Rāmānanda (*Rasataraṅgiṇī*); Raghunāthamanohara (*Kavikaustubha* and *Chhandoratnamālā*)

the *Rājaprashasti* (1676) a *mahākāvya* in twenty-two cantos, authored by Raṇachhoḍa a Telugu Brahmin.

(2) Persian

The Sultānate Period

When the Mongols ravaged Central Asia many Persian scholars from Transoxiana, Bukhara, Khorasan and other places took refuge in India and brought with them their rich collection of manuscripts. These scholars enriched Persian literature in India. Some of the important historical works of the period were the *Dīwān* of Masūd Sad Salman, the *Tāj-ul-Mā'āsir* of Hasan Nizāmi Nishapurī, the *Chach Nāma* or History of Sind of Ali, the *Tabaqāt-i-Nāsirī* of Minhāj-i-Sirāj, the *Adab-ul-Harb* compiled by Fakr-i-Muddabir, which is a treatise on warfare, and the Persian anthology of Awfi Bukhārī. Alberuni's *Kitābus Sāydanā* or book of drugs was translated by Bakr into Persian.

Amīr Khusrav, who lived in the time of 'Alā-ul-dīn Khaljī, was a prolific writer. He authored half a million verses and ninety-nine other works. Among these are his five *Khamsas* or literary pieces. The *Hasht Bihisht* (The Eight Paradises) dealing with the adventures of Bahram won for him a monthly stipend of a thousand *tankās* for life. The *Qiran-us-Sa'adain* gives an account of the historic meeting of Bughra Khān and Kaiqubād and has interesting descriptions of Delhi.

Khvāja Najm-ud-dīn Hasan of Delhi, who was one of the court poets of 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī, was an eminent writer and poet. His book *Fawā'id-ul-Fu'ād* contains the utterances of the Sūfī saint Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn Auliya. Other poets who wrote their collection of poems in the time of Sultān 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī were Sadr-ud-dīn 'Alī, Fakhr-ud-dīn Qawwās, Hamīd-ud-dīn Rāja, Maulānā 'Ārif Abdul-Hakīm and Shihāb-ud-dīn Sadr-nishin.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was a great patron of learning. The famous Moorish traveller Ibn Batūtah came to India in his reign. His court historian was Ziyā-ud-dīn Barnī. Among other historical works he wrote the *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhī*, Muhammad of Chāch wrote many *ghazals*, *rubā'īs* and *qasīdas*.

The chronicler 'Isāmī wrote the *Futūh-us-Salātīn* dealing with the account of rulers from the rise of the Ghaznavids to 1349-50.

Firūz Tughluq too continued to patronise learning and gave large annual endowments, to scholars. He himself wrote the *Futūhāt-i-Firūz Shāhī* in which he gives details of the work done by him to benefit the public. The poet 'Izz-ud-dīn Khālid Khānī wrote his work *Dalā'i-Firūz Shāhī* based on the Sanskrit manuscripts found in the archives of the Jvālāmukhī temple. Sams-i-Sirāj 'Afīf completed the *Tārīkh-i-Firūz Shāhī* which was begun by Barnī. Muhammad Bihāmad Khānī wrote a general history, the *Tārīkh-i-Muhammadī* covering the period from the time of the Prophet to 1388-9.

All through the fifteenth century the work of translating Sanskrit works into Persian went on at a fast pace. Under the patronage of king Zainul 'Ābidīn of Kāshmir the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rājataranginī* were translated into Persian. Similarly many Persian works formed the basis of books in Indian languages. Shīvara, for example, wrote *Kathā Kautuk* on the theme of Jāmī's *Yusuf and Zuleikā*.

A remarkable literary work of the period was the *Tibb-i-Sikandarī*, a medical treatise based on the works of many ancient masters of Indian medicine. It was edited by Miān Bhuā Sultān Sikandar Lodī's prime-minister and many scholars of repute contributed to it. Many other original works of merit were produced in the later Sultānate period. Muhammad bin Shaikh Zain-ud-dīn compiled a lexicon entitled *Farhang-i-Sikandarī* and dedicated it to Sikandar Lodī. Other writers of note were Zahīr Dehlvi (Zahīr being, the title conferred on him by the Sultān), Maulānā Hasan Naqshī, Maulānā 'Alī Ahmad Nishānī and Nūral Haqq. But the greatest scholar and poet of the times was Shaikh Jamāl Kambū, traveller, theologian, poet and writer. He wrote among other works, a biography of saints *Siyār-ul-'Ārifīn*.¹⁰ His *dīwāns* have, as Badāūnī tells us, almost eight to nine thousand couplets. His poetry is of a high order, as for example:

10 His other better known works are : *Masnavī Mehr O Māh* and the *Dīwān*.

'My heart's desire is fixed on thy abode
 Oh thou that art long absent from my sight;
 By day and night the thought of thee alone
 My constant partner is.'¹¹

Fifteenth century Persian literature covers a wide range of subjects—translations, medicine, philosophy, theology, poetry lexicography and biography. But no historical work was produced with the lone exception of Yahyā bin Sarhindī's *Tārīkh-i-Mubārak Shāhī*. Very little was written on this subject till the coming of the Mughals.

Persian Literature in the Deccan

Mention has already been made of 'Islamī's valuable historical work the *Futūh-us-Salātīn*. A number of scholarly works were produced during the time of Mahmūd Gāvān, the famous minister of the Bahmanī Kingdom, who was himself a scholar of repute. He collected the letters of 'Abdur-Rahmān Jāmī in book form (the *Riyāz-ul-Inshā*), wrote a *dīwān* which however is lost and a work on the art of literary contribution known as the *Manāẓir-ul-Inshā*. Muhammad Shāh II wrote the *Wazīr*, Sharaf-ud-dīn 'Alī Yāzdi the *Zafar-Nāma*, Jalāl-ud-dīn the *Shawakil-Hūr* and Shams-nd-din Sakhawī the *Dhulama*. Poetry flourished under the Ādil Shāhī and Nizām Shāhī kings, the main poets being Zahūrī, Qummī Sanjar-i-Kāshanī and Ātashī. Some of the important historical works produced were the *Burhān-i-Ma'āsir* of Syed 'Alī, the *Tazkirāt-ul-Mulk* of Rafī-ud-dīn Shirāzī the *Fatuhāt-i-Ādil Shāhī* of Fuzūnī Astrabadi, the *Muhammad Nāma* of Mullā Zuhūrī, the *Gulshan-i-Ībrāhīmī* of Firishta, the *Tārīkh-i-Muhammad Qutub Shāhī*, and the *Ma'āsir-i-Qutvb Shāhī*, of Mahmud Nishapurī.

Persian Literature in Mughal Times

While Bābur was seeking a new empire in India, the Safavid persecution was on in Persia. A number of renowned Persian

11 Cited in Badāūni (trans. Ranking).

scholars who found the atmosphere of the Delhi court more genial than that of their own, migrated to India. Abu-'l-Fazl notes that in Akbar's time about seventy-five scholars found asylum in India. The influx continued during the reigns of Jahāngīr and Shāh Jahān, both of whom, like Akbar, were patrons of learning. Besides this many nobles of the Mughal court liberally encouraged poets and scholars. Very soon Persian acquired a greater excellence in India than it possessed in the land of its birth

(a) *Poetry*

All kinds of poems were written—odes (*ghazals*) quatrains (*qasīdās*), fragments of verse (*qatas*) and so forth, but odes were most popular. The renowned *ghazal* writers were 'Urfī of Shīrāz, Saīb Tabrizi, Nāzirī Nishāpūrī and 'Alī Naqī. Among writers of *qasīdās* the prominent writers were 'Urfī, Zahūrī and Tālib Amulī. The *masnavī* however was on the decline and the only one of repute written was Shāh Jahān Nāma, that too in a highly ornamental style. The *rubāi* was greatly popular and often the thought was expressed in just one verse. Nāzirī and Sarmad were the renowned *rubai* writers. Maulānā Qāsim Kahī who lived during the reigns of Humāyūn, and Akbar composed chronograms, Mullā Ghāzalī Mashhadī who was Akbar's poet laureate composed *masnavīs* of which the best known ones were *Mashad-i-Anwar* and *Mīrat-us-sāfa*. Three of most renowned Persian poets were Bābā Fighānī, 'Urfī of Shīrāz and Shaikh Abdul Faizī on whom the title of Mālik-us-Shuarā was conferred. His *Dīwān*, *Tabashir-us-Subh*, contains a number of *qasīdās*, *ghazals* and other verses. Mīrzā Abdūl Qādir Bedī of Patnā wrote some ninety thousand verses. Chander Bhān, a favourite of Dārā Shukoh, was a gifted poet. Dārā himself wrote a *Dīwān* containing *ghazals* and *rubaiyāts*. Almost all the Mughal kings composed verses. Jahanārā Zebunnisā and Nūr Jahān were adept in versification, Often there were repartees in verse and exchanges between kings and their royal consorts. For example once Jahāngīr said 'Why do old and experienced people go about with bent backs? Nūr Jahān replied 'They go about searchieg for the days of their

youth which lie mingled with the dust'. Once to express his love Jāhāngīr said to Nur Jahān

'I do not utter plaintive cries like the nightingale
I die without a moan like the moth'.

To which Nūr Jahān instantly replied:

'I am not the moth that dies instantly
I die by inches like the candle burning through the night'.

Sometimes the thought of the Persian poets of Mughal times soars to sublime heights, as for example when Tālib says

'To the abuses hurled at me I reply with blessings
Like the cloud which takes salt water but returns it sweet.'

At the same time the Persian poets were slow to adopt their poetry to Indian modes and manners. Their subject matter was Persian flowers birds and landscape. They were indifferent to the beauty of Indian things and found no charm in them. In this respect they maintained the same supercilious attitude to India, as Bābur, the first of the Mughals.

(b) Prose

In comparison to poetry Persian prose was rather poor in variety and content. The most common subject was history. A number of chroniclers wrote official accounts of the events in reigns of their rulers. The most important of such works is the *Akbar-nāma* of Abu-'l-Fazl who also wrote the *Āin-i Akbarī*, the *Inshā* (royal despatches), and the *Ruqa'āt* (letters). Together they throw much light on Akbar's administration and the day to day events of his reign. Other accounts of chroniclers are: the *Tārkh-i-Alfī* of Mullā Ahmad Thattawī, the *Muntakhab al-Tawārikh* of Mullā 'Abdul Qādir Badāūnī, the *Tubaqāt-i-Akbarī* of Nizām-ud-dīn Ahmad Bakshi, *Tārkh-i-Humāyūn Shāhī* and so forth. Most of the [prose was verbose, artificial and full of exaggerations.

(c) *Autobiographies and Letters*

Mughal emperors wrote charming memoirs. Originally written in Turkī, Bābur's *Tuzūk-i-Bābarī* was translated into Persian by 'Abdur Rahīm Khān-i-Khanān during Akbar's reign. Bābur charmingly describes natural beauty and the places visited by him. He is frank, personal and sometimes emotional. Jahāngir's memoirs are lucid and show his almost scientific curiosity in nature.

Some of the famous collection of letters are the *Insha-i-Abu'l-Fazl*, the *Insha-i-Brahman* and *Ruqqat-i-Ālamgirī*. They are written in fine Persian prose and are a valuable source for the study of medieval history.

(d) *Other Literary Works*

Commentaries, travel books and expositions of Sūfī doctrines were written. Examples of these are the commentaries on *Nuzhat-ul-Arwah* by Shaikh Abdul Wāhid Bilgramī, Shaikh Abdul Haq's *Madīnā Sakīnā* and *Madār-i-Jūn Nabawwat*, *Dābistān-i-Mazāhib* a work on comparative religion by Mullā Mushin Fānī, the *Asmat-i-Anbiyā* of Mullā Abdullah Sultanpurī and Dārā Shukoh's *Majma-ul-Bahrain*.

Another class of books was biographies — Muhammad Islām, Dārā Shukoh, Muin-ud-dīn Chishti, Abdul Baqī who wrote the biography of his patron 'Abdur Rahīm Khān-i-Khanān, Abdul Haq and Muhammad Ghausī who wrote about renowned saints. The *Ma'āsir-ul-Umrā* describes the lives of the important nobles of the period.

A number of books on grammar, dictionaries and encyclopaedias were compiled 'Abdur Rashid's *Farhang-i Rashidi* and *Muntakhab-ul-Lughat-i-Shāhjahānī* are voluminous dictionaries. *Shāhid-i-Sādiq* was a comprehensive encyclopaedia prepared in Shāh Jahān's reign, which took three years to complete. *Chahār Ansār Dānish* was another such work. Two glossaries were prepared, one giving Persian words and their Sanskrit equivalents and the other a comparative study of Sūfī and Vedāmic terms. Tek Chand Bahar was the author of a renowned dictionary, the *Bahār Ajam*. Maulānā Barārī compiled a scientific

encyclopaedia known as *Uqūl-i-Ashrah*.

(e) *Translations*

A number of translations were made from Sanskrit to Persian during the Sultānate period, the earliest from the time of Iltut-mish. Zain-ud-dīn Nakshabī's *Tutināma*, Azīz-ud-dīn Khālid's *Dalail-i-Firūz Shāhī* translation of a Sanskrit book on astronomy the *Mufarrih ul-Qulub* (translation of *Hitopadesha*) Miān Bhowā's *Madan-ush-Shifā* (translation of *Aiyur Mahāvaidak* a Sanskrit medicine book), Qāzī Rukn-ud-dīn's Persian translation of *Amrita Kunḍa* a book on *yoga*, are some of the translations of these times.

In the Mughal period Akbar ordered the sacred books of Hindus 'which were the very pivot on which their religion, faith and holiness turned', to be translated into Persian. As a result a number of translations were made. These were of the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Atharva Veda*, *Harivaṃsa*, *Rāj Tāranginī*, *Nal Daman*, the *Panchatantra*, *Singāsan Battisī*, *Kāthā Sarita Sāgara*, the *Upanishads*, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Yoga Vashishṭa* and *Prabodh Chandra Vidyā*.

Arabic and Turkish works were also translated into Persian, as for example *Hayāt-ul-Haywan*, *Jām-i-Rashīdī*, *-Tavqiat-i-Kisrawī* *Fatwa-i-Ālamgirī*, *Bābur-nāma* and *Majam-ul-Buldan* (an Arabic work on geography).

(3) *Arabic*

Despite the Arab conquest of Sind as early as the eighth century, much headway could not be made in the introduction of Arabic literature in India. The culture of Persia was so vastly superior at this time that most of the works were produced in Persian rather than Arabic. There were Arabic poets like Abū Ata Aflāh-as-Sindhi, Rāhib Suhaib and commentators like Hājib 'Abdur Rahmān and Abu Hāfiz bin Subayah in the eighth century but most of the writings of this period are lost. Abu Raihān Alberunī the scholar who accompanied Mahmūd of Ghaznī to India wrote *Kitāb-ul-Hind*, a treatise on astronomy entitled *Qānūn-i-Masūdī* and a book on minerology. Razi-ud-

dīn- Hasan-as-Singhani who lived in the reign of Iltutmish wrote a scientific dictionary known as *Lubāh-vz-Zakhīrā*, and *Mashariqul Anwar* a collections. of traditions. Some books were written under the patronage of the Shārqī king of Jaunpur by Allāh Diyā of Jaunpur. One of the outstanding titles was the *Hidāyat-ul-Fiqh*. The *Fatāwāi-i-Ālamgiri*, a treatise on Islāmic law, was compiled by various scholars in the reign of Aurangzib.

Gujarāt contributed many Arabic books particularly on the Sūfī doctrine. Abdul Haq wrote *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*. A dictionary of *hadīth* literature was compiled by Muhammad bin Tāhir. 'Alī al Muttaqi wrote *Knazul Umma*. Abdullāh al Makī's *Zafarul Walīh* was a work on the history of Gujarat. Commentaries on the *Qurān* were written, the best known ones being *Tafsīr-ur-Rahmān* and *Sawaṭi-ul-Ulham*.

In the later Sultānate period most Arabic works were confined to commentaries on the *Qurān* and *Hadīs*. Saiyyad Muhammad, known popularly as Gīsū darāz (a Sūfī saint) wrote *Ar-Risālātu fi Masā'ili Ruyati'ul-Bārī Ta'alā*. 'Alī bin Ahmad Mahā'imī wrote a commentary on the *Qurān* and one on the *Fiqh* entitled *Fiqh-i-Makhdūmī*. Other scholars were Qāzī Shihābuddīn, and Budruddīn Muhammad.

A number of Arabic works were written under the patronage of the Bahmanī Sultāns and the Qutub Shāhī kings. Manhalus Sāfī *fi Sharhi-l-wafī* was a work on Arabic grammar. *Tafsīr-ul-Qurān* was written by Muhazib-ud-dīn Damamīnī and *Shajrat-ud-Dānish* by Nizām-ud-dīn Gilānī. Faizī wrote his famous commentary on the *Qurān*, entitled *Swāti-ul-Ilhām* in Akbar's reign, while Farīd-ud-dīn compiled *Zy-i-Shāhjahānī*, a work on astronomy. Other works in Arabic belonging to these times are *Lomāt-ul-Tanqih* of Abdul Haqq Dihlawī, *Faizul Bārī* of Syed Abdullah Awwāl and the theological treatises of Shaikh Nizām-ud-dīn and Shāh Waliullah Dihlāwī.

(4) Hindi

The development of Hindi in the Sultānate period was slow. But during the Mughal period a number of excellent poets enriched the language with their works. *Prithviroja rāsau* was written near about 1206. The main centre of literary develop-

ment in the early period was Rājasthān. It was here that the Rājput heroic romances like the *Visāla-deva-rāsau*, *Khumāṇarāsau*, and *Ālhā-ūdal* were written. Some of the Muslim writers also wrote verses in Hindi as for example Amīr Khusrav and Bandhā Nawās Gesū Dārāz (the *Mīrāt-ul-Āshiqīn*).

The *bhaktī* movement gave a great impetus to Hindi, particularly to devotional poetry. Gorakhnāth, Kabīr, Dharam-dāsa, Gurū Nānak, Dādū, Mīrābāi and others wrote their songs and verses in Hindi or in a mixture of Hīndī and other languages. The Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar, encouraged Hindi. Muhammad Jāyasī wrote the *Padmāvat* which was composed in the Hīndī metre and dialect.

Poetry

Mīrābāi wrote her devotional verses in Hindi. Four collections of her verses exist namely *Narasī-kā-mayara*, *Gītāgovinda-ṭīkā*, *Rāgāgovinda* and *Rāga soraṭha ke pada*. Kirpā Rāma wrote *Hita-tārangīnī* which is a work in *brajbhāshā* dealing with the art of poetry. Krishṇadāsa was one of Aṣṭachhops or eight famous poets. He wrote the *Jugal Manachitra* which contains verses depicting the loves of Rādhā and Krishṇa. Another great poet was Narhari Bandijana (1550). Akbar conferred on him the title of Mahāpātra and was so pleased with one of his verses that he forthwith got cow slaughter prohibited. His famous works are *Kavitta-sangraha* and *Rukmīnī-mangal*. Another poet of renown who recited his songs in Akbar's court, was Nandadāsa (1569). He wrote the *Rasapañcha-adhyāyī*. Sūrdāsa, the blind poet of Āgrā, wrote many rapturous lyrics on Krishṇa. His monumental work is *Sūr-sāgara*. Another is *Bhrama-gīta* (Song of the Black bee). Rājā Bīrbal (1528-83) wrote witty verses. Akbar conferred on him the title of Kavīrāya (Prince of poets). One of the greatest poets of the age was Keshavdāsa (1555-1617) who wrote the *Kavipriyā*, *Rasikpriyā* and *Rāmachandrikā*. The first book lays down the conventions governing Hindi poetry. The *Rashikpriya* is about the moods and situations of *nāyaks* and

nāyikas with particular reference to Rādhā and Kṛishṇa, while the *Rāmachandrikā* gives the poet's ideas about the Rāma story. Raskhān (1583) was a devotional poet of great renown. His main works are *Prem-vāṭikā* and *Sujān-Raskhān*. Another prominent work of the times is the *Bhagatmāla* of Nabhādasājī. The poet of undisputed fame is Tulsīdāsa, author of the celebrated *Rāmacharitamanasa*. The work is in Avadhī but Tulsīdāsa uses many words from other dialects also, particularly *brajbhāshā* (the language of Braj) and occasionally also words of Arabic and Persian origin. Several other works were also written by him the prominent ones being the *Dohāvali*, *Gītāvali*, *Vinaya Patrikā* and the *Kavitta Rāmāyaṇa*.

The greatest of Muslim poets writing in Hindi was 'Abdur Rahīm Khān-i-Khanān. His main works are *Rahīm Dohāvali*, *Bārvai Nāyikā Bhēd* and *Shrīngāra Sorāṭha*. Other renowned writers of Hindi poetry of the age were Sundaradāsa (*Sundara-vilāsa*), Banārsidāsa (*Banārsivilāsa*), Dhruvadāsa (*Bhagata Nāmāvali*) Chintāmaṇi (*Chhanda-vichāra*) and Usmān (*Chitrāvali*). Sundar, author of *Sundara-shrīngal* was given the title of Mahākavi-rāya by Shāh Jahān. Seṇāpati was the Indian Wordsworth, and has charming descriptions of nature in his work the *Kavitta-ratnākar*. Matirāma wrote simple yet dignified poetry. His works are *Chhandasāra*, *Raṣṛāja*, *Lakshana-shringāra* and *Satsaī*. Bhushaṇa, who wrote *Shiva Bhavānī* and *Chhatarsāladashakas* was honoured with the title of Kavi Bhūshaṇa by the Solāṅkī rāyā of Chitrakūt. Poet Beharī wrote his momentous work on love poetry known as the *Satsaī*. This is a collection of seven hundred verses. Of Beharī's poems Grierson says, 'The elegance, poetic flavour and ingenuity of expression in this difficult task are considered to have been unapproached by any other poet'. Lāl Kavi was a poet at the court of Maharāj Chhatrasāl Bundelā in whose honour he composed his *Chhatra-prakāsha*. Another prominent poet was Devadatta who wrote as many as fifty-two books of poetry.

Prose

Prose does not seem to have been very popular. Nevertheless Hīndī writers did produce just a few prose works. Viṭthal

Nāth (1550) wrote *Shriṅgār-rasa-mandir*, Nandadāsa a commentary on *Vigyān-artha-prakāśhikā*, Gaṅgā Bhaṭ a short work entitled *Chand Chhand Barman ki Mahimā*. Jaṭ Mal (1623) was a prominent writer who wrote *Gorā Bādal ki kathā* dealing with the story of Ratna Sen, Padmāvatī, Gorā and Bādal. This is in prose interspersed with verse. *Gyān Chūrn Vachanikā* was written by Manōhar Dās in 1650. Jagjī Charan wrote *Ratan Mahesdasat Vachanikā* as a panegyric on the valiant Ratan Singh, *rāja* of Ratlām. Another work partly in prose and partly in verse was *Gunsār* whose author was Ajit Singh son of Maharājā Jaswant Singh.

(5) Urdu

The Most significant development in the clash of two rival cultures—the Hindu and the Muslim—was the birth of the Urdu language. Urdu was not a language imported from outside. It was a native of India, and was the result of the mingling of the Persian Arabic and Indian languages. Anilchandra Banerjī says ‘Almost every work in Indo-Persian literature contains a large number of words of Indian origin, and thousands of Persian words became naturalized in every Indian vernacular language. This mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskritic origin is extremely interesting from the philological point of view, and this co-ordination of unknowns resulted in the origin of the beautiful Urdu language.’¹²

Chand Bardāī's *Prithvirāja-rāsau* contains a medley of languages like *kharī-bōlī brajbhāshā*, Rājasthānī, Arabic and Persian. But while Urdu remained a spoken dialect in the north, it took a literary shape in the south. The kings of Bijāpur and Golcondā patronised it. Syed Gesu Darāz wrote a treatise on mysticism known as *Mirāj-ul-ashiqīn*. Shāh Mīrān wrote *Khushnāma* and Shams-ul-ushshāq wrote *Khushnagh*. *Jammatul-baqā* was written by Burhan-ud-dīn Jānum. Ibrāhīm Ādil, Shāh of Bijāpur wrote his famous book *Nauras* in 1599. Muhammad Quli Qutub Shāh of Golcondā was not only

¹² quoted in G.T. Garrat, *The Legacy of India*, Oxford, 1937, p. 293.

himself a prolific writer of Urdu verse, but also patronised many Urdu writers and poets, as for example Mullā Wajhī who wrote *Sabras*, a prose work, and *Qutub Mushtari*, a book of verses. Urdu continued to be popular in the Deccan, while in the north the Delhi school of poets was founded by Hātim. The main exponents of this school were Mirzā Muhammad Rafī Sauda (1713-80), Mīr Muhammad Taqī Mīr (1772-1810) and Mīr Ghulām Hasan (1727-86). Unlike other poets who were mainly writers of *ghazals*, Sauda wrote in addition, *qasīdās*, *masnavīs*, *wasokht* and satire. He is the pioneer of the Urdu style of verse known as *Tamsiliā-shāirī*. Mīr's poetry is sad, gloomy and pathetic. But it is moving and powerful and he is known as *khuda-e-sukhan* ('lord of speech'). His best poetry are the short *ghazals*. Describing the overpowering splendour of a lovely woman he says :

She came into the assembly, so much Mīr saw,
After that the lights of the lamps lost their brightness.

Ghulām Hasan was a great *masnavī* writer, as his work *Sihir-ul-bayān* shows. His descriptions are vivid, his style simple, direct and expressive, although he is uncharitable while delineating ladies of the aristocracy. In prose two monumental works of the eighteenth century were written by Inshā. These are *Rānī-kerki-ki-kahānī* and *Daryā-e-latāfat*. Two highly Persianised and artificially written works are Fazlī's *Deh-majlis* (1714) and Atā Husain Tahsīm's *Naw Tarz-e-Murassa*.

(6) The Regional Languages

(a) Bengali

The earliest Bengali work *Charyyapadas* belongs to the tenth century. It condemns ritualism and advocates devotion as the way to salvation. Thereafter followed the Muhammadan conquest of Bengal which led to stagnation in Bengali literature for the next three hundred years.

After the fourteenth century three categories of Bengali works were produced. These were (i) Vaishṇava literature mainly

about Chaitanya's life and thought (ii) literature based on the epics like the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, and (iii) the *maṅgala kāvyas* which largely treat of the deathless love of Bihulā for her husband, Lakshmīndhara, the story of the merchant Dhanapati, and of Kālaketu and Phullarā. As regards Vaishṇava literature, Chāṇḍīdāsa's work was the most prominent. Many consider him to be the greatest lyric poet of Bengal prior to Rabindranath Tagore. Other poets who wrote on spiritual themes were Narharī, Rāmānanda Basu, and Murārī Gupte. These were contemporaries of Chaitanya. A number of writers of the sixteenth century wrote on the life of Chaitanya, the most important of them being Kishandāsa Kavirāja whose work is the *Chaitanya Charitāmrita*.

A number of works based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* were written. The most important of these were the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Krittibāsa and the *Mahābhārata* of Kāsīrāma. Poets who wrote *maṅgal-kāvyas* were Mānik Dutta and Mukandarāma. Another work was the *Ānunha Mangal* of Bharat Chandra. The *maṅgala-kāvyas* describe in verse the glories of popular gods and goddesses, such as Manasā (the snake goddess), Chāṇḍī, Dharma-Thakur, Shiva and so forth. The central theme of *Manasā-maṅgala* is the conversion of Chāṇḍ Sadāgar, a rich merchant who would not worship Manasā in the beginning, but started doing so after his seven sons were killed one after the other by snake-bite. Another interesting story portrayed by this form of *kāvya* is that of Behulā, the widow of the seventh son, who carried the dead body of her husband in a raft to the abode of the gods. She managed to win their favour by showing her skill in music and dance, and they restored her husband to life.

Bengali literature of the eighteenth century continued the trends introduced in the seventeenth. The *maṅgala-kāvya* continued to be popular. The greatest poet of the period was Bhāratchandra Ray Guṇakar who wrote *Annadā-maṅgala*. Opportunity is taken by the poet to voice the dissatisfaction felt by Hindus towards some Muslim rulers, particularly 'Alī Vardī Khān, and their policy of destruction of temples. Another great poet was Rāmaprasāda Sen who wrote *Kālī-kīrtan* and *Krishṇa-kīrtan* as well as a poem depicting the loves of Vidyā

and Suṇḍara. A valuable historical document was *Rājamālā* (chronicle of kings). This narrates among other things the raids of Marāthā soldiers made in Bengal, and the resultant suffering of the people.

A beginning was made in Bengali prose with *Kripār Shāstrer Arthabhed* composed by Manoel da Assumpcam in Dacca (1734). In the same year a Bengali Grammar was written in Portugese alongwith a Bengali Portugese dictionary. Another prose work was the *Brāhman Roman Catholic Sambād*.

(b) Gujarati

Gujarātī literature has maintained a steady progress right from the beginning of the eleventh century. Hemachandra the learned Jain scholar collected over a hundred couplets in Apabrahṃsha language. Perhaps the first Gujarātī literary work is *Bharata Bahuholi Rasa* by Salibhadra. Early in the sixteenth century Padmanābha wrote his *Kānhaḍa-de-Prabandha*. This describes the war of the last Hindu king of Gujarāt with the Muslims under 'Alā-ud-dīn Khaljī. To this period also belong the poetical works of the *Sadayvatsā Khathā* of Bhīma, Vijayasena's *Revantagiri rasā* and Vinayaprabhā's *Gautamasvāmī-rasa*. There are also the shorter poems of Rājashekhara, Jayashekhara and Somasundra. Manikya wrote *Prithvichandra-charitra* in prose mixed with verse.

The *bhaktī* movement which spread over India in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries gave Gujarātī literature new vigour. Mīrābāī and Narasimha Mehtā were the two great poets of Gujarāt at this time. The latter poet was the author of the well-known *bhajan* (devotional song) *Vaishṇava Jana to tenē kahiye* of which Mahatma Gandhi wrote 'That one song is enough to sustain me if I were to forget the *Bhagavad Gītā*'. Narasimha Mehtā suffered many sorrows. He was forsaken by his own relations and thrown out by his community yet he continued steadfastly in his devotion to Lord Kṛishṇa. His works are *Shringāramālā* and *Rasasahasrapadi*. Another great writer and poet was Akhā Bhagat or Akho (1615-74). He lost his parents early, and also his wife and only sister. He was imprisoned on a false charge. Disgusted with the world he

worshipped and prayed but found no peace thereby. Ultimately he went to Kāshī (Banāras) and found his solace in *Vedānta* philosophy. He was known as Vedānta-kavi-shiromaṇi. His works are *Akhegītā* and the collection of poems known as *Chhapāis* (epigrammatic stanzas). The supreme master of narrative poetry was Premānanda (1636-1724). He was the greatest among medieval poets and wrote as many as fifty-seven works, most of them based on incidents from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Māhābhārata*. Another poet was Sāmalbhaṭṭa who had a remarkable knack of narrative and story-telling. Many Purāṇic works are attributed to him. Dayārāma was the last great Gujarātī poet of medieval India. He wrote lyrical poems of great excellence.

(c) Oriya

Although Oṛiyā originated in the 8th-9th century, the first great writer, Sāralādāsa, belongs to the fourteenth century. He wrote the *Chaṇḍī Purāṇa* and the *Vilāṅkā*, both extolling the goddess Durgā and also gave an abbreviated version of the *Mahābhārata*. A century later five writers, the *pañcha sakhā* decided to write in Oṛiyā instead of Sanskrit. These five were Balarāmadāsa, Jagannāthadāsa Anantadāsa, Vasovantadāsa and Achyutānandadāsa. Their aim was to bring the Sanskrit scriptures closer to the people. Balarāmadāsa wrote the first Oṛiyā *Rāmāyaṇa*. Jagannātha translated the *Bhāgavat* into graceful Oṛiyā. A great deal of Vaishṇava poetry was produced at this time inspired by Chaitanya. Another type of poetry was the one written by the court poets of small nobles and chiefs. The chief of such poets was Upendra Bhauja Dāsa. He wrote *kāvyas* based on the epics and the *Purāṇas*, particularly *Lovanyavatī*, whose hero is the prince of Carnatic and the heroine the princess of Ceylon. Vaishṇava poetry whose theme was the loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa continued to attract a number of lyric poets, as for example Dina Kṛṣṇadāsa, Abhimanyu, Sāmanta Sinhar, Kavisūrya Bāldēva Rath and Gopāl Kṛṣṇa. Bāldēva's *Champu* is a unique work on Oṛiyā musical drama. Gopāl Kṛṣṇa's melodious songs are greatly popular and are sung even now in Oṛiyā homes. *Sumar Tarang* of Brijnātha Badjena

which describes the courageous stand of the people of Dhenkanal against the Marāthās is a historical poem, the only one of its kind.

(d) *Punjabi*

The early period of Punjābī literature is from the eighth to the twelfth centuries. Gurū Gorakh Nāth and his followers belong to this era. The earliest evidence of the existence of Punjābī literature is to be found in the writings of Shaikh Farīd-ud-dīn Ganj-i-Shakar (1173-1265). He was succeeded by a number of poets. Who wrote mainly war ballads (*vārs*). Some of these works are the *Vār* of Rāj, the *Vār* of Mānj, the *Vār* of Tuṇḍa Asrājā and the *Vār* of Sīkandār Ibrāhīm.

Gurū Nānak started the school of Punjābī devotional poetry. His vigorous and highly spiritual poems are incorporated in the *Ādi Granth* which was compiled by Gurū Arjun in 1604. Nānak also wrote lyrical poems (*shabdas*). Bhāi Gurdas wrote both in Punjābī as well as in the Braj language. He displays a mastery over metre and has sublimity of thought. Other Punjābī poets were Madholāl Husain, Shāh Husain Sultān Bahu, Bulhe Shāh and 'Alī Haider. A number of ballads were written about the courageous stand of the *gurūs* against the Mughals. The most well known of these are *Bhaire di Vār* and *Chaṇḍi di Var*. Gurū Gobind Singh wrote a number of books which are incorporated in the *Dasam Granth*.

Apart from these religious and spiritual themes, a number of love poems were also written by Punjābī writers. Prominent among these are *Hīr Rānjhā* written by Dāmodar of Jhang district, *Mīrzā Sahibān* written by Pīlu, a contemporary of Gurū Arjun, *Yusuf-Zulekhā*, *Shīrin-Farhād*, *Lailā-Majnū*, *Mahinwāl* and *Sōnī* and *Sassī Pannū*. Some of the Sanskrit classics, like the *Bhagavad Gītā* and *Yoga Vashisṭha*, were also translated into Punjābī in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

(e) *Kāshmirī*

The earliest extant work in *Kāshmirī* is Shatī Kānthā's *Mohanyaya*

Prakāsha (13th century). It is a book on Tāntrism. Some poems appear to have been written by Lallā Dīdī (Lal Ded) who led on unhappy family life and became an ascetic. She wrote about a hundred mystic songs about the god Shiva. Thereafter a Muslim saint, Shāh Nūr-ud-dīn (Nanda *ṛishī* to Hindus) wrote some verses which have been collected in the *Nūr Nāmah*. A number of writers flourished in the age of the enlightened king Zain-ul-'Abīdīn (1420-70), but their works are lost.

In the sixteenth century a woman known as Habba Khotūn (also Zun from 'moonlight') who was happily married to King Yūsuf Chakk (1580-86) was separated from her husband whom Akbar carried off as captive. Zun became a hermit and wrote many poignant lyrics which are sung in Kāshmir even to this day. Another Kāshmirī poetess was Aranimal who lived in the eighteenth century. She too was separated from her husband and wrote songs full of pathos and longing for union with the beloved. Khwājah Habībullāh Naushahrī wrote a series of lyrics. Sāhib Kaul wrote *Krishṇa-avatāra* and *Janam-charita* both based on the *Purāṇas*. Rūpabhavānī, a poetess (1624-1720) wrote a number of the religious poems in pedantic Sanskrit.

(f) Assamese

Assamese is the language spoken in the Brahmapūtra valley. Although these are not many people who speak the language it has a rich literature. The oldest writer is Hemā Sarasvatī (late 13th century). He wrote the *Prahlāda-charita* which was based on the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*. Harihara Vipra and Kaviratna Sarasvatī rendered into Assamese verse incidents from the *Mahābhārata*. The first great Assamese poet was Kavirāja Madhava (14th century). He wrote in simple Assamese a version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and a narrative poems, *Devajit*, on *Krishṇa*. Durgāvara wrote the *Gīta-Rāmāyaṇa*, the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in songs. The poets Pītāmbara and Mānakara wrote a large number of love songs on the story of Ushā and Aniruddha and Bihulā and Lakshmīndhara. *Mantras* (magical charms) were written in large numbers by unknown writers.

These contain charms against¹ snake-bite, ghosts, demons, diseases and so forth.

The greatest period of Assamese literature was ushered in by the *bhaktī* movement inaugurated by Shankaradeva the Vaishṇava religious reformer and poet who wrote as many as twenty-seven works. His hymns and other poems form the basis of evening prayers in Assam homes. The next great poet of the early Assamese period was Mādhavadāsa (1489-1596), a disciple of Shankaradeva, who wrote devotional poetry and poetry on the life of Krishṇa. Rāma Sarasvatī translated four *parvas* of the *Mahābhārata* and rendered into Assamese some stories from the *Purāṇas*. Gopāla-Chandra Dvija wrote verses on the Krishṇa story as contained in the scriptures. Bhaṭṭadeva translated into Assamese prose the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

A significant development in Assamese prose was the appearance of the *Burañjis* under the Āhom kings. These are the Assamese historical chronicles.¹³ *Burañjis* were also occasionally written in verse. The *Kali Bhārat* is a verse history of the Āhom kings, and *Belimarar Burañji* (History of the Sunset) a chronicle of the last of the Āhom rulers.

In the eighteenth century more emphasis was placed on secular rather than religious subjects. Books were written on astrology, mathematics, veterinary science, rituals, dance and music, apart from stories and romances. On veterinary science there were three treatise, *Hasti-vidārṇava* dealing with elephants, and one on the same subject by Sukumar Barkath, and a book on horse diseases, *Ashwanidān*, written by Sūryakharī Daivajña. *Bhāsvatī* of Kavirāja Chakravarti is an astronomical work, *Kitābat Mañjari* of Bakul Kāyastha (1734), a book on arithmetic, *Hasta Muktaṭvalī* of Shubhaṅkara Kavi, a treatise on dancing, and Rāma Dvija's *Mrigavatī Charit* a poem in the romantic manner.

(g) Marathi

Marāṭhī literature took shape in the twelfth century, and the

13 The works are *Pādshā Burañi*, *Asam Burañji*, *Kamrūpa Burañji*, *Kāchārī Burañji*, *Jayantia Burañj* and *Tuglungia Burañji*.

first of Marāṭhī poets is believed to be Mukundarāja who wrote *Vivekasindhū* in 1188. The main exponent of Marāṭhī literature of these early times, however, is Jñyaneshwar and his *Jñyaneshwari* is an exposition of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The *bhakti* movement gave inspiration to a number of Marāṭhī saints and writers, like Ekanātha (1533-99) Nāmadeva and Jñānadeva. Jñānadeva's famous works are *Bhāvārtha Dīpikā* and *Anubhavamṛta* which have a noble flight of philosophical thinking. Ekanātha was a great saint and scholar. He wrote a commentary on the eleventh chapter of the *Bhāgavata* known as *Ekanāthī Bhāgavata* which is his masterpiece. His *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa* has 40,000 verses and the *Rukminī Svayomvara* 1,711. He prepared a unique scholarly edition of the *Jñyaneshvarī*, in addition to writing a number of poems and commentaries. Ekanātha had an overpowering love for the Marāṭhī language. He wrote: 'My language, Marāṭhī is worthy of expressing the highest sentiments, and is rich laden with the fruits of divine knowledge'. Other writers also wrote on Hindu scriptures in Marāṭhī and brought them within the reach of the common people. Dasopanta (1559-1615) has left us about forty-five works running into more than two hundred thousand verses. Some of his works are *Gītārṇava*, *Gitartha-bodha-chandrikā*, *Pañchikarana*. He wrote many songs and poems. The first complete Marāṭhī translation of the *Mahābhārata* was made by Mukteshvara. Vamana Paṇḍit wrote a commentary on the *Gītā*.

Sant Tukārāma (1598-1650) was a renowned Marāṭhā devotional poet and philosopher. He lost his first wife (he had two) and his firstborn son in a famine. His trade was also ruined. For consolation he turned to spiritualism. He was initiated by Gurū Bābājī in a dream and had vision of Viṭṭhala and Nāmadeva who advised him to compose the *abhaṅgas* (devotional songs). He wrote at least 4,500 songs which are sung even to this day. He advanced the cause of religion and tried to uproot disbelief. Samartha Rāmadāsa Svāmī (1608-82) left home at the early age of twelve, and is said to have a vision of god Rāma. He travelled all over dedicating himself to public service. His outstanding work is *Dāsabodha*, a prose work of the highest spiritual experience. His *Ānandavana Bhuvana* is the vision of the ideal state in which the wicked are destroyed and the good

people protected. In *Asmani Sultani* and *Parachakra-nirupana* he dwells on the condition of the people and on how to ameliorate them. His other works *Rāmāyaṇa* (in Marāṭhī) *Karuṇā-shtake*, *Manache Shloka* and *Rāmavaradayinī* are of a high standard. He also wrote a number of devotional songs. Raghunātha Paṇḍita, a contemporary of Shivāji, wrote a number of works, *Gajendramoksha*, and *Nala-Damayanti-Savayamvara* being the most prominent. Ānandatanaya, a scholar-poet, wrote the *Sītā-svayamvara*. Nāgesha, who was also Shivāji's contemporary, wrote a book of the same name, and another known as *Chandrāvali-varṇanā*. These contain many witty and humorous observations on the social life of the period. Shivāji got the *Rāja-vyavahāra-kosha* compiled. This gives much useful information. The *pōvāḍas* (ballads or songs) narrating historical events in a heroic vein became greatly popular. One such ballad, by Agīndas records Shivāji's encounter with Afzal Khān and another by Tulsīdās recounts the heroic capture of Simhagaḍ by Tānājī.

In the eighteenth century a great deal of Marāṭhī literature of varied kind was written. This included scholastic poetry which had many exponents like Kacheshwar Brahme, Bajāji, Niranjan Mādhar, Tryambak, Dāso Digambar, Mahipati Tahrabadkar, Maropant and Jyotipant Dādā Mahābhāgawat. Bardic poetry was written by scholars such as Anant Phandī, Parashurām, Rām Joshi, Prabhākar, Saganbhāu and Honājī Bālā. Then there were historical letters (*bakhars*). These are in prose and describe historical events. About two hundred of these were written, but only half the number have survived. Many works of philosophy, poetry and religious stories were also written in this period. The literature covered mostly old traditional subjects and was not of the progressive kind, as D.K. Kelkar says, 'The literature of the eighteenth century reflects the values of a static or stagnant society'.¹⁴

(h) Kannada

The Vīrashaiva movement gave great impetus to Kannada

14 D.K. Kelkar, *Marathi Sahityache Sinhalokan* (1963) p. 506.

literature. Mystical prose (known as *vachana*) was written in a simple yet forceful manner. The prominent writers of this mystical literature were Basava, Allamaprabhu and Akkamabādevī. At the close of the twelfth century Harihara and Rāghavanka devised a new style of writing in what came to be known the *desī* metre. Harihara's biography of Basavesh and Rāghavanka's *Harīshchandra kāvya* are examples of this kind of writing. Under the patronage of the Hoysala kings several scholarly works were produced in the *champū* style, as for example *Līlāvatī* and *Nemi Purāṇa* of Nemi Chandra, *Jagannātha Vijaya* of Rudra Bhaṭṭa, *Anantanātha Purāṇa* of Janna and *Kabbigarākāvya* of Andayya.

Under the patronage of the kings of Vijayanagara, Kannaḍa literature made much progress. Books on poetry, devotional poems and songs, biography, grammar were written. *Prabhu-līnga-līlā* is a biography of the Vaishṇava saint and mystic, Allamā Prabhū. The *Malabāsavarāja-charitra* is the life story of the Virashaiva leader, Bāsava. This was written by Siṅgirāja, who also wrote *Vivēka Chintāmaṇī* an encyclopaedia of philosophy and religion. Other prominent works produced are: *Bharata* of Kumāra Vyāsa, *Kumāra Ramaṇa Kathā* of Nanjunda Kavi, *Chennābasaya Purāṇa* of Virupaksha Paṇḍita. Tinmanna, a poet of note wrote *Kriṣṇarāya Bhārata Kathāmanjarī* an outstanding work of Vaishṇava literature. Dāsakuta was renowned poet who wrote devotional songs. A number of Jain scholars wrote in Kannaḍa: Ratnākara Varṇa gave his views of living in *Bhāratesa Vaibhava*. Abhinavavadi Vidyānanda compiled an anthology of Kannaḍa poems known as *Kāvyasāra*. A Kannaḍa grammar was written by Jain Bhaṭṭakalankadēva.

Kannaḍa literature flourished in the seventeenth century under the patronage of Chikkadēvarāya, the Mysore ruler (1672-1704). He himself was an author of standing and wrote more than thirty books. Some of the more prominent ones are *Vishṇupurāṇa Rukmangada-charitra* and *Chikkadēvaraya Binnapā*. Honnamā was a renowned Kannaḍa poetess whose work *Hadibadeya Dharma* is a meritorious treatise on philosophy.

In the eighteenth century the break up of the Vijayanagara empire caused Karnāṭaka to pass through a period of political instability. Brahmin writers predominate in these times. The women authors of note are Helavananakaṭṭe, Giryamma and

Cheluvāmba. Cheluvāmba was the queen of Doḍḍa Krishṇa Rājā (1717-31). Her book Varanaṇḍī Kalyāṇa in about the legend of Bibi Nāchīyār. .Giriyamma tells the stories of *Chandrahāsa* and *Uddālīka*. The Haridās movement was represented by Vijaya Dās who wrote many songs. The history of Mysore was written by Nagarada Puṭṭayya and Shānubhoga Veṅkataramaṇayya. Works of mediciné are the *Vidya Kanda* of Brahma and Kalale Vira Rāja's *Vaidya Samhitāsārāṇava*. Nañjarāj, a great scholar wrote about twenty-two work. Haidar's minister, Veṅkamātya (1772) wrote many works in Sanskrit.

(i) *Malayalam*

Malayālam language initially followed two different courses, the Sanskrit and the Tamil, till Thunchathu Ezhuthachan (19th century) who is known as the 'father of Malayālam' brought about a fusion and uniformity of style. He freely borrowed from Sanskrit, but kept the base of his language the indigenous way of writing.

The origin of Malayālam goes back to the ninth century. The first literary work of importance was the *Bhāsha Kauṭilyam* a Malayālam commentary on the *Arthashastra*. Two distinct forms of writing are discernable in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the *champūs* which are narratives in prose and verse, and the *sandesa kāvyas*, long epistles in verse. The two outstanding *champū* writings are the *Uṇṇiyadicharitham* and *Uṇṇiyachichavitham*, both dealing with the lives of royal courtesans and depicting the social conditions of the times. An example of *sandesa kāvya* is *Unni Nīli Sandesam* a work on the style of Kālīdāsa's *Meghdūta*. Another work is *Kokasandesan*. However the most renowned are the Niranam poets who tried to free Malayālam of Sanskrit and Tamil idioms and expression. The most outstanding scholar of this group of poets was Rāma Panikkar whose *Rāmāyaṇa* is in Malayālam. He also wrote *Bhāratam*, *Bhagavatam* and *Sivarātrimahātmyam*. Cherussery Nambūrti wrote *Krishṇa Gāthā*, and Mādhava Panikkar translated the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

As has been stated, Ezhuthachan revolutionised Malayālam. He made a translation of the *Adhyatma Rāmāyaṇam* from

Sanskrit. He also wrote the *Mahābhāratam*, a unique work and a classic in Malayālam literature.

In the seventeenth century the *kathakalī* literature gained prominence. This was a kind of dance-drama. The main writers of *kathakalī* were Koṭṭāyathu Tampuran. Aswati Tirunal and Irayimman Tampī. Tampuran's *Kāla-keya-vādhm* is one of the prominent dance-dramas, but the greatest of them is the *Nala-charitram* of Unnayi Warriar, which is in the class of Kālidāsa's famous play, *Shakuntalā*.

In the earlier parts of the eighteenth century Umar Pulavar wrote *Sirappuranam*, a life of Prophet Muhammad. The renowned author and poet, Sivagnāna Munivar who lived in the middle of the eighteenth century wrote *Mapadiyān*, a commentary on *Sivagnāna Bodam*.

Devotional literature was written by Pūntnaām Nambūdiri, the author of *Nārāyaṇīyam*. A number of books on astronomy, medicine, astrology and mathematics were written. An important figure in the literary history of Malayālam is Kunjan Nambiār who belonged to the community of temple servants. He expounded a new solo dance art known as *tullal*. Kunjan was the poet of the people. He wrote on *Purāṇic* themes but made them popular by adopting them to the existing social conditions, and introduced humour and satire. Rāmapurattu Vāryar wrote *Kucheluvritam*, the story of Sudāmā.

Many missionary workers who settled down in Kerala wrote books on grammar. A native missionary Parammekkāvīl Tomā Kattanār who accompanied Bishop Kariyāṭṭil Joseph to Rome, wrote a travelogue, the first of its kind.

(j) Telugu

The first extant Telugu work belongs to the eleventh century. It is a version of the *Mahābhārata* written by Nannayya, Tikkana and Yerrapragada. The earliest version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* known as Ragnātha *Rāmāyaṇa* was written by Goṇa Buddha Reddi in 1250. The Virashaiva movement led to the production of many literary works, of which the more prominent are the *Basava Purāṇa* and *Paṇḍita-radhye-charitra* of Somanātha.

A number of poetical works were written. Nanhā Choḍa

translated Kālīdāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, and Eluganti Peddana produced a version of Bhāskara's *Līlāvātī* in Telugu. The renowned poet Srinātha translated *Naisadha-kāvya* into Telugu, while Bammara Potana (1420-75) translated the *Bhāgavatam*. Potana was a renowned poet, and his other works are *Bhogiṇī Daṇḍaka* and *Virabhadra Vijayam*.

It was with the great Vijayanagara king Krishṇadevaraya that the golden period of Telugu literature began. Before that translations, adaptations and imitations of Sanskrit classics were the only achievement. But under Krishṇadeva's patronage original works made their appearance. A new type of *kāvya*, the *Prabandha* was produced. Though the themes were still borrowed from Sanskrit, the treatment was new. Eight court-poets of Krishṇadeva were specially honoured by the title of *Ashṭa Diggajāh*. Of these the most renowned was Ailasāni Peddana, author of *Manu-charitra*, which is based on the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*'s story of Svārochisha Manu. Peddana was honoured with the title *Āndhra kavitā pitāmaha* (the creator of Telugu poetry). Another court poet was Naddi Timmana who wrote *Pārijātāpaharaṇa Prabandha* which has as its subject the romantic episode of Pārijāta in the *Harivaṃsha*. Other poets were Dhūraṭi who wrote *Kālahastimā hātmya* and *Srī Kālahastīshvamu Shataka*; Mādayagāri Mallana whose work is *Rajashehekkhaacharitra*; and Tenāli Rāmaliṅga who is known more for his humorous anecdotes than for his poetry. Piṅgali Sūrana who wrote *Rāghava-Pāṇḍavīyamu* evolved a style in which the words had double meaning. His pictures of women, his vivid descriptions and the vast variety of entertainment he provides in his works, are Shakesperian in their grand and noble concept. Sūrana is also expert in the art of poetry. Bhaṭṭu Mūrṭi another poet who was honoured in the royal court was the author of many works such as *Kāvya-laiṅkāra Saṅgraha*, *Vasucharitra* and *Harishchandra Nalōpākhyānamu*. He is a master of pun and his language is expressive.

The Qutb Shāhī kings of Golcondā, particularly Malik Ibrāhīm were enthusiastic patrons of Telugu literature, and a

15 The eight legendary elephants which are believed to bear the earth's, burden.

number of poets—Saraṅgu Tammayya, Kandukūru Rudra Kavi, Addanki Gaṅgādhara Kavi and Ponnekaṇṭi Telaganna—flourished in their times. Some of the writers produced a kind of play set to music and dance (*Yakshagāṇa*) which was becoming popular then. An example is the *Sugrīva Vijaya* of Kandukūru Rudra Kavi.

After the fall of the Vijayanagara empire in 1565 decadence set in. Still a number of poets and writers continued to flourish. Tekumalla Raṅga Shāyi compile a miniature cyclopaedia *Vāṇivīlāsa Vanamālikā*, the first of its kind. Kavi Chaudappa wrote a *Shataka* which became very popular because of its fun, frolic and romance. Scholarly works too were written, like Elakūchi Veṅkaṭa Kṛishṇayya's *Rāghava Yādava Pāṇḍavīyam*, a triple *entendre* containing the stories of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bhāgavata* and *Mahābhārata*. Historical narratives were written, as for example Andugula Veṅkayya's *Narapati-vijayamu* and Kumāra Dhūrjaṭi's *Kṛishṇarāya Vijayamu*. Books on grammar were produced, notably *Appakavi-yamu* of Appakavi, and the *Sarvalakṣhṇa Shirōmaṇi* written by a junior contemporary of his.

Although the Vijayanagara empire was destroyed, the poets and writers continued to receive royal patronage under the Nāyaka kings of Tanjore and Madura. Raghunātha Nāyaka of Tanjore (1600-32) was himself an accomplished poet both in Telugu and Sanskrit. He wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Vālmīka-chāritra* and the *Nala-chāritra* and poems in Telugu. His court poetess, Rāmabhadrāmba, described his court in her work *Raghunāthābhyaudaya*. Dance dramas were written in large numbers. These were full of wit and humour and gave a picturesque account of the life and manners of the times. The Tanjore court under Vijayarāghava was also famous for its *podas* (lyrical musical compositions). A new kind of prose literature became popular in the Madura court. A history in slang was written containing anecdotes of the Vijayanagara kings. Another poet Vikaṭa Kavi Gōpālarayūḍa wrote an outspoken account of the love affairs of queen Maṅgamma (1682-1706) with the princes and generals of her times, entitled *Madhura Maṅgala Puṁshchalivilāsamu*.

In the eighteenth century we find many non-Brahmins enter-

ing the literary field. They wrote prose works, ballads, books on grammar, prosody, poetics and other varieties of literature. In 1712 the Christian missionaries introduced the printing press and this gave a fillip to the writings of the age. It was a time of uncertainty and many experiments in new forms were made. Shāhjī Bhosle (1684-1712), Ekojī's eldest son, wrote twenty plays in Telugu, and patronised many writers. The Madurai court produced a lot of prose literature and erotic poetry. In Karnāṭaka the Kempa Gowda princes and king Kanthirava Narasa Rāju of Mysore patronised Telugu. The latter wrote eight works of the *Yakshagāna* type and many *Sringāra padas*. Books were written on a variety of themes, like classical, philosophical, didactic, devotional and even erotic. Some of the writers were: Kasturi Rangakavi, Velidināla Venkatapati, Rīgvedī Venkatāchalam, Kuchimanchi Jaggakavi, who wrote a pornographic poem, *Chandralekha (Vilāpamu)*, Adidam Surakavi, Gogulapati Kurmanāth Kavi, Shrī Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha and Koti Raya Raghunāth Tonḍainman.

(k) Tamil

Due to the unsettled condition of south India in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Tamil literature did not make much progress. Nevertheless a few literary masterpieces and a number of charming verses were written.

Villiputtūrar wrote a popular version of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhāratam* in Tamil. Part of the *Bhāratam* was completed by Ranganātha Kavirāyar. It is one of the most popular of Tamil poems and read with zeal even now. Aruṇagiri, Villiputtūrar's contemporary, wrote *Tiruppugazh*, a Tamil devotional book of poetry and song. Shivāchāriar wrote the *kanda purāṇam*, an elaborate work on the feats of god Sūbramanya. Kālamekam, who lived a wild, unconventional, and adventurous life, wrote a unique type of book, *Ekāmbaranāthar Ulā* which is a kind of picaresque novel in verse about courtesans, gods, men, beasts, and impossible people and situations. Veṅkaṭanātha (Vedānta-deshika) was a versatile scholar and writer. He wrote *Rahasyat-raysāra* in a language which is a mixture of Tamil and Sanskrit.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a period of

decadence in Tamil literature. Poetry lost its emotional content and was reduced to verbal dexterity. There was poverty in thought and expression. Yet a few poets and writers redeemed the age by their inspiring works. The courts of Tamil kings and the Shaiva *maṭhas* or *mutts* (centres of religion and learning) encouraged such writers.

Varathungan Pāṇḍyan wrote the *Pramottarakandam* in devotion to Shiva. One stanza of this says:

only these are blessed—
 eyes that gaze at Shiva's temple,
 feet that enter it;
 heads that bow to him,
 hands that give him offering:
 only the tongues that sing his glory are blessed,
 the ears that hear his praises,
 hearts that meditate on him;
 allegiance to him alone is true allegiance.

Varathungan's other works are *Ambikaimalai*, *Illingapurāṇam*, *Tirukkaruvai*, *Patitruppattanthati* and so forth.

His cousin Athivirarama Pāṇḍyan, too, was a great writer. He wrote *Naidatham* (which is known as 'poet's elixir'), *Kāshī-kandam* in praise of Kāshī (Banāras), and *Narunthokai* a book of verses and aphorisms. One of its verses says:

A forest in which fierce tigers roam
 Is better than a city ruled by a tyrant.

Kumara Guruparar, an ascetic of a *mutt*, who is said to have met the Mughal emperor, seated on a lion, wrote many works, the most prominent being *Needi Neri Vilakkam* and *Madurakkalambakam*. Commenting on the evanescence of life he wrote:

Youth is like a water bubble,
 Riches shortlived as waves:
 The body is like letters writ on water.

Sivaprakasara also belonged to a *mutt*. He wrote *Prabhulinga-lile*

on the life of the Vīrashaiva saint Allama Prabhu, and another work *Nanneri*. Paranjoti, who belonged to a *mutt* in Madura wrote *Tiruvilayadal Purāṇam* on the deeds of Shiva. His other work are *Tirukkalurkunra Purāṇam* and *Seyur Kalambakam*. Pillaipperumal Iyengar known as 'Diyya Kavi' is a Vaishṇava poet devoted to Raṅganātha. His lyrics are included in his work *Aṣṭprabandham*. Another renowned Tamil poet was Padikkasuppulavar, about whom there exist many legends. It is said he used to put five gold pieces every day on the Pañchākshara steps of Shivakami Ammai.

The period following Aurangzib's death was one of instability and stagnation. Even in Tamil country the effect of this was felt and literature lost its vitality. The credit of infusing life into the banal type of writings which were the products of the age belongs to the Christian missionaries who set up printing presses and made a study of the indigenous languages. The Danish missionary, Zeigenbalg wrote a Tamil grammar and translated the *Bible* into Tamil. Constantine, Beschi, the Italian Jesuit, popularly known as 'Virama Munivar', learnt the Tamil language and wrote a Tamil epic of the name of *Tembavani*.

Muhammadan poets also wrote in Tamil in the mystic strain. Sakkarai Pulaver wrote a Tamil poem on Medina. Muhammad Ibrāhīm wrote the *Muhaidīn Purāṇam*. Masthān Sāhib was a lyricist and devotional poet.

The outstanding Tamil poet of the eighteenth century was the great Shiva mystic Thayumanavar. On the death of his wife he became an ascetic and wandered about singing rapturous songs. One of his songs is:

My only thought is, O Lord
To see others happy:
Teach me, O Lord, to feel
Another's pain as mine own.

Arunāchala Kavirāyar, another eighteenth century poet wrote a dramatised version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* entitled *Rāmanāṭakam*. Rājappā Kavirāyar was the author of two Shaiva works, *Kuttala Sthalapurāṇam* and *Kuttala Kuravañchi*. Vedamalayappan

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Pillai wrote the *Maccha Purāṇam*. Gurupāda Dāsar was the writer of *Kumāresha Shatakam*, containing moral and worldly-wise maxims. Ānanda Ranga Pillai, a commercial agent to the French has left us a unique and diary of the events from 1736 to 1760, which is a valuable source book of history. A ballad of a semi-historic character was written in memory of Tej Singh, governor of Jinjee.

Science and Technology

The medieval period of history was marked by the prosperity of the nobles and the ruling classes, and the utter poverty of the general populace. Such a state of affairs could not be conducive to the development of science and industry. Even then there was greater contact and exchange between the ruling classes and the ruled in the field of science and technology, than in that of art and culture. The scientific mind cares little for differences in race and religion and so we find Muslim emperors interested even in astrology, and Hindus admirers of the Muslim system of medicine. Yet despite some advances in science there was no major breakthrough, and knowledge remained primitive.

1. Astronomy

Astronomy and astrology had their uses, but they were mainly status symbols, for their practice gave one social importance and respectability. They were adopted more for this reason than for their scientific interest. The main objects of astronomy were working out a calendar, fixing the dates of the seasons, calculations of time, casting of horoscopes, and for navigation.

Observatories existed from before at Ujjain and Banāras. They were gradually extended to other cities as well, as for example Delhi and Mathurā. Firūz Tughluq was

interested in astronomy and possessed many books on the subject. He got a novel astrolabe made and got it fixed on the highest minaret of Firozābād for astronomical observation.

Fīrūz Shāh Bahmanī, too was a great lover of astronomy and began the construction of an observatory near Daulatābād, though it could not be completed. Humāyūn was particularly interested in astronomy, a knowledge of which he had imbibed during his stay in Persia and Irāq. He built the Sher Maṇḍal a three storeyed building which housed a library as well as an observatory. Just before his fatal fall from the stairs of this building he was exchanging views with astronomers about the impending appearance of the planet Venus in the sky. His love for astronomy can be seen by the fact that he created pavilions in which nine skies and the different stars of each were emblematically represented. He also made a pavilion with the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Akbar was interested in advancing the science of astronomy. According to Abu-'l-Fazl's account in '*Āin-i-Akbarī*' some observatories were built by him.¹ He also ordered one to be built at Banāras according to an account of Sir Robert Barker recorded in 1777.² The emperor introduced a new Ilāhī era. According to the *Akbar-nāma* the king's horoscope was prepared by four astrologers, for Akbar, like Humāyūn, was a believer in astrology. Shāh Jahān had court astrologers whose advice he took on important matters.

The best chain of observatories was made by Rājā Sawāi Jai Singh of Jaipur (1686-1743), at Delhi and Jaipur. These were begun in 1718 and finished in 1734. Instead of the small metallic instruments used hitherto, Jai Singh got masonried ones made in his observatories. The chief instrument used for astronomical observation was the astrolabe. By the seventeenth century about forty of these had been made. Lahore was a major centre for producing them. Other instruments used were various kinds of quadrants and armillary spheres. Sawāi Jai Singh developed several new instruments to increase accuracy and to widen the scope of astronomy. The reasons for these changes are said to

1 '*Āin-i-Akbarī*, 2 : 2.

2 Robert Barker, *Brahman's Observatory at Banaras*.

be as follows: 'But finding that brass instruments did not come up to the ideas which he had formed of accuracy because of the smallness of their size, the want of divisions into minutes, the shaking and wearing of their axes, the displacement of the centres of the circles, and the shifting of the planes of the instruments, he concluded that the reason why the determination of the ancients, such as Hipparchus and Ptolemy proved inaccurate; therefore, he constructed instruments of his own invention, of stone and lime, of perfect stability, while attention to the rules of geometry, and the adjustment to the meridian, and to the latitude of the place, and with care in the measuring and fixing of them.'³

Both lunar and solar calendars were in use during the medieval period. Many variations of these were enforced.

The scheme of Ptolemy was accepted in general. Some believed the earth to be flat, others that it was a solid sphere. Its rotation was denied, but the seasons were explained by saying that the sun, revolved round the earth. The geocentric theory was generally accepted.

Most of the books written on astronomy were commentaries on earlier works. The original Sanskrit works were as follows:⁴ *Tables of Makaranda* (1478), *Grahalāghava* of Gaṇeśha (1528) and *Tajika Neelakaṇṭha* (1587). *Neelakaṇṭha* gives in Sanskrit the astronomy of the Arabo-Persian school. Astronomical tables produced were the *Zij-i-Shāh Jehānī* (1628-29) of Fariḥ'd-Dīn Masūd bin Hāfiz Ibrāhīm Dehlavi. In Shāh Jahān's reign Malajīt wrote *Parsiyrakāsa*, which is about conversion of dates. Sawāi Jai Singh's *Zij-i-Jadīd Muhammad Shāhī* was an epoch making book on astronomy.

2. Mathematics

Even before the medieval period renowned Indian mathematicians had made their contributions in the field. Sridhara wrote

³ *Asiatic Researches* 5 (1973), 177-211.

⁴ *Science and Technology in India*, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1973, p. 6. (authors A. Rahman, R.N. Bhargava, M.A. Qureshi and Sudarshan Pruthi).

Gaṇita-sāra in the eleventh century. This deals with multiplication, division, square root, cubes, fractions, zero, natural numbers, partnership, mensuration and shadow reckoning. In the twelfth century Bhāskara wrote *Līlāvati*, *Bija Gaṇita* and *Siddhānta Siromaṇī*. These dealt with various topics like notation, operation with integers, fractions, commercial rules, interest, permutation and combination, algebra, directed numbers, negative quantities, spheres and simple and quadratic equations.

In the medieval period mathematics formed a subject of study and included arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, and also curiously enough, music. Positive integers, fractions, mensuration, measurement of weight, and calculation of distances, as well as rule of three and the method of trial and error, comprised the teaching of arithmetic. In algebra the quadratic equation was particularly studied, and Bhāskara, Amulī and Al-Khwarizmi made the greatest contribution towards this. The problems which came down from earlier times were solved. Euclid's translations formed the basis of medieval geometry. Maulvi Muhammad Barkat and Mīr Muhammad Hāshim wrote commentaries on these and said something about the theory of parallel postulates.

In general there was more of interpretation by writing commentaries and summaries on earlier works, rather than developing new ideas. Astronomy was, however, an exception and evoked a lot of interest. Considerable attention was given to the use of astronomical knowledge in alchemy and astrology, and in making magical squares.

The main authors of the period were as follows: Bahā-ud-dīn Amulī, Nasir-ud-dīn Arraq and Al-Kasī. Amulī's *Khulā sat'l-Hisāb* was the most widely consulted book. Sanskrit works were those of Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, the *Gaṇita Pāli Kaumidī*, and the *Ukaranthya Grantha* of Nayana Sakha. The commentators and those who wrote translations of original works were mainly Ustād Ahmad al-Mī'mar Lahorī, his sons 'Atau'llah Rashidi and Lutufu'llah Muhandis and Muhandis's two sons Imām-ud-dīn Riadī and Khairu'llah. Riadī wrote twenty-five book on many subjects, particularly on mathematics and astronomy.

3. Medicine

As the Muslim system of medicine is based on the Arabic, a brief narration of the principles of Arab medicine would not be out of place. The emphasis of the medicine of the Arabs was on the diagnosis of diseases and their cures. In diagnosis the physician observed the general condition of the patient, felt his pulse and examined his urine by having a look at it. Without any clinical tests, diagnosis largely depended on the doctor's experience.

The essential principles which govern the functioning of the human body are seven according to Unānī medicine. These are elements (*arkān*), temperament (*mizāj*) humours (*akhlāt*), members (*āzā*), vital breaths (*arwāh*), energy (*quvā*) and actions (*afzāl*).

The human body was believed to consist of four elements viz. earth, water, air and fire. The reaction of these elements determined a person's temperament, which could broadly be classed as hot, cold, dry or moist. The humours are also four viz. phlegm, blood, yellow bile and black bile. They are produced from food, when it undergoes the process of digestion. In a healthy individual these humours are balanced, but when their proper proportion is disturbed there is loss of health. Organs of the body are either simple, like bones, tissues, muscle and so forth, or compound which are the union of these, like the face hands, thighs and other limbs. The essential organs are four namely the liver, heart, brain and the reproductive organs. Other like the kidneys, lungs etc. are not classified under this head. Vital breaths are three—the vital spirit residing in the heart (*rūh-e-haiwānī*) which is responsible for vital activities; the animal spirit (*rūh-e-nafsānī*) lodged in the brain which causes movement, sensation and intellectual activity; and the natural spirit (*rūh-e-tabāī*) which is placed in the liver and is responsible for the formation of blood, nutrition and sexual desire. Energy, which provides the motive force for different bodily functions, is of three kind—vital (*haiwānīa*), animal (*nafsānīa*) and natural (*tabīa*). Actions denote the functioning of a particular organ of the body, a group of organs or of the entire body. A Persian medical treatise of the seventeenth century namely *Thufutu'l-*

Momī-mīn of Muhammad Momīn Husainī Tunkabanī was widely consulted by Indian physicians. This discusses the effects of drugs and gives the views of various physicians about it.

Dissection of the human body was forbidden in Islām, so there was no appreciable advance in knowledge of anatomy. But there was no bar to dissection of animals. Al-Rāzi cut open a dead monkey to ascertain the cause of its death, and found that the outer covering of the heart contained the kind of liquid which one finds in a blister. The dissection of a cock revealed that the heart's outer covering had become hard and dry. A Persian monograph on anatomy, *Tushrīr bi al-Taswīr* (the *Illustrated Anatomy*) written by Mansūr-bin Muhammad-bin-Ahmad Yusuf-bin-Fiqih mentions the number of bones in the body as 248, and the cranial nerves as seven pairs. Mansūr considered the filum terminale to be a single nerve, thus making thirty-one pairs of spinal nerves and an odd one. Some works on anatomy in the medieval period are *Mukhtasar dar'illm-i-Tasarin*, *Riyad-i-'Ālamgirī*, *Tashrihu'l-Badan*, and *Khulāsātu 'I-Tashrih*. The last mentioned work is illustrated.

It is interesting to note that the Arab medical scholars laid down the signs in a pregnant woman which denote whether the baby to be born will be a boy or a girl. Al-Rāzi writes in *al-Hāwī* : 'If the foetus is found on her right side, her face becomes charming, her right breast becomes larger in size, her movements are somewhat swift, the veins of her right leg become reddish in colour, milk begins to flow first from the right breast, and whenever she wants to get up from her sitting position, she rises on her right hand, she will give birth to a male child; the opposite of the above signs indicate a female child. If the breast milk is sticky the child will be male, and so too if the breast milk, dropped on a piece of glass and exposed to mild sun solidifies in the shape of a pearl. On the other hand if the milk on the glass spreads it will be a girl'.

Knowledge about the functioning of the different organs of the body was crude. It was considered that the functions of the nerves arteries and veins was more or less similar. Blood was said to form in the liver from the food eaten, and carried to various

parts of the body through veins. Arteries on the other hand originated from the heart and conveyed the vital spirit lodged there to different parts of the body. Ibn-al-Nafīs, who worked at the Cairo hospital, wrote about the pulmonary circulation of blood, but the idea was not clearly understood then.

Surgery was in a primitive stage, and only the most eminent surgeons could earn a name for themselves. Even then operations were carried out which included laparotomy, head operations, removal of tonsils and nasal polypi, excision of the tongue to remove malignant growths, excision of varicose veins and haemorrhoids, amputation of limbs and so forth. Ibn-Sinā introduced treatment of fistula by probing. Threads of cotton or silk, sheep-gut pig's bristles, and when fine stitching was required even the hair of a woman, were used as sutures. Al-Rāzi invented the use of animal gut which dissolved after performing its function, for suturing the cut ends of the bowel. Blood-letting was very common, and preceded an operation or served as cure. Jahāngīr got it done on him to relieve eye-trouble. He writes 'On Monday the 28th, I found that some thing had gone wrong with my eye. As it arose from too much blood, I ordered 'Alī Akbar, the surgeon to open a vein. On the next day the benefit of this was apparent. I bestowed 1,000 rupees on him'.

In ophthalmology and the treatment of eye diseases Arabian physicians made some progress. Husain Ibn-Ishāq (809-73) was one of the greatest among eye-specialists in old times. He wrote a treatise called *The Book of Ten Discourses on the Eye*.⁵ One of the best known texts was *Tadhkirāt-al-Kuhhālīn* (A Thesaurus for Oculists) compiled by 'Alī-ibn-Isā: This was completed at the close of the tenth century. In the field of optics one of the greatest specialists was Ibn-al-Haitam (965-1039). The outstanding contribution of the Arabs was in contract.

In the medieval period specialised books were written on various diseases such as fevers, organs of the body and so forth. *Nuru'l Ayun* by Zarrin Dust (1087-88) gives the structure of the eye and its diseases and their prevention.

A number of books are about poisons and their antidotes. A number of drugs were prepared from medicinal plants. Decoctions and extracts were made and their action on the human system studied. Powers (*sufuf*) were extensively used. Curiously enough oils and perfumes were considered to be part of medicine. Often strange and crude medicines were employed, as for example elephant's fat, stag's horn and even human fat which, Manucci says, 'was to be taken secretly only so that no one knew'.⁶ Emetics, decoctions, powers, pills, poultices, plasters, fumigation, inhalation, snuffs, nasal douching, ointments and confection, formed the various modes of treatment. Sedatives, purgatives and diuretics, were used.

Dietetics was emphasised, and so we find mention of the preparation of fruit preserves, sherbets, and pickles. Though some knowledge of the technical processes involved in making these must doubtless have been known, there is no evidence of any proper or systematic study.

Emphasis was placed on proper sanitation and we find directions about this being given in *Riyad-e-Ālamgīrī* of Muhammad Rada. The Sanskrit works on medicine belonging to the medieval period were mainly *Chikitsā Kālikā* of Tisata (14th century), *Bhavaprakāśa* of Bhavamisrā (16th century), *Vaidyajīvana* of Lolimbarājā (17th century) and *Vriksāyurveda* of Surapāla, a book on plant diseases.

Medieval medicine was built up on the foundation of the Arab system. Long practice and individual skill were particularly significant in such a system. Renowned *hakīms* built up their own practice and had strong personal views about medicine and remedies. In the period of the Tughluqs, for example, Shaikh Ahmad bin Sihāb Sūfī was an eminent physician. Hakīm-ul-Mulk Nizām-ud-dīn Ahmad Gilānī flourished in the reign of Qutub Shāh. In the Mughal period a number of eminent physicians established themselves like Hakīm' Alī-Gilānī, Fathullah Shirāzī Hakīm Hummām, Hakīm-ul-Mulk Gilānī, Hakīm Muhammad Misrī Burhānpurī, Muzaffar bin Muhammad-al-Husainī-Shifai, Hakīm Rūhullah, Hakīm Dūnud bin Ināyatullah Akarābādī who cured Shāh Jahān of retention

⁶ *Storia Do Mogor*, (Irvine) 2, 198.

of urine, and Hakīm Muhammad Akbar-bin-Muhammad Muqīn Arzanī. Although hospitals are mentioned, their organisation was primitive. Medicine depended on individual personal resources, and hence remained in a somewhat undeveloped state.

4. Chemistry and Alchemy

There was no scientific approach to chemistry and stress was laid rather on alchemy than on [this science. All through the medieval period the belief persisted that the base metals like copper, lead, tin and iron were impure or unripe and the pure or ripe state of the metals was gold. It was thought that the base metals could by some alchemic process be transmuted into gold and on the same analogy the mortal human body could, by the elixir of life, be made immortal. A search constantly went on for discovering such a method. The belief was shared by Hindus also who thought that such a transformation of base metals into gold could be accomplished by a *pāras* stone. The '*Āin-i-Akbarī*' mentions that according to the Hindus such a stone was actually discovered in the reign of one Rājā Jai Siṅg Deva. A straw-cutter's sickle accidentally touched it and was turned into gold. The stone was dug out and was taken to the king, who being of a detached disposition, presented it to a Brahmin. The Brahmin, not knowing its value, was indignant on being given a mere stone as gift, and threw it into the deep part of a river. Thus it was eternally lost. Another Brahmin was engaged by a Jāt ruler to get him the *pāras* stone. The Brahmin swindled from him a large sum of money, and when he found no way out of the impossible situation, he murdered the luckless ruler.

The first Muslim alchemist was Khālīd ibn Yāzīd (704). The greatest of the early alchemists, however, was Jabir or Geber. He believed that there were four elements, fire, earth, air and water with four qualities (*khawas*) namely hot, dry, moist and cold. Another belief was that under the influence of the planets metals were formed in the earth by the union of sulphur and mercury. But these were not always pure and united in different proportions. When they united in equal proportions

and maintained purity, the result was the production of gold. Minerals were classed by Jabir into three groups (1) spirits or substances which volatilize, completely on heating (2) metals which are malleable, sonorous and have lustre, and (3) substances which can be powdered. Of the first group are sulphur, arsenic (sulphides), mercury, camphor and sal-ammoniac. The five metals are gold, silver, lead, tin and iron, and an unidentified metal given the name *kharsini*. The minerals were either stony or not stony, fusible or non-fusible, and pulverisable or not pulverisable. Jabir discovered many substances, like oil of vitriol (sulphuric acid), aqua fortis (nitric acid), aqua regia (nitric and hydrochloric acid), corrosive sublimate and lunar caustic.⁷

Al-Rāzi (865-925) wrote the alchemical work *kitāb Sirr al-Asrār*. He classifies all substances into animal, vegetable and mineral. He also gives a list of apparatus employed in alchemical laboratories which includes beakers, flasks, phials, basins and so forth. Substances mentioned by him as being used in the science of alchemy are cinnabar, white lead, red lead, litharge, ferric oxide, verdigris, copper oxide and white vinegar.

Alchemy remained an obsession with Muslim scholars for many centuries. Ibn Batūtah mentions such beliefs prevalent among the people. A girl who was being married received a number of copper utensils, all of which were turned to gold by a mystical process which is narrated as follows : 'So he laid them (the utensils) before him. He then lit fires round him, and taking out a purse which he had, containing an elixir, threw some of it over the brass, and the whole array was changed into gold.'⁸

The *Āin-i-Akbarī* mentions minerals to be of five kinds: those which do not melt on account of their dryness like the *yāqūt*; those which do not melt on account of their liquidity as quick-silver; those which can be melted, being at the same time neither malleable nor inflammable as blue stone; fourthly those which can be melted, being however not malleable but inflammable as sulphur; fifthly those which can be melted and are malleable but not inflammable, as gold.

7 Rafiq M. Khan, *The First Chemist*.

8 Ibn Batūtah, 59.

The system of weights and balances in use was crude. Poppy seeds, barley, mustard seed, *gunia rattī* and *māshā* were used. Though a large number of compounds were prepared and used as drugs, they were not identified or named. Dyeing, manufacture of dyes, sugar making, paper manufacture, making of salt, salt petre, perfumes, scented waters and turpentine{oil were some of the industrial processes known. Fireworks, weapons, glazed tiles, pottery and mineral acids were manufactured, but there was absence of standardisation.

Knowledge of chemical and technical processes were passed down orally from father to son or from teacher to student, and so we have few written books about them. The few works we have are about the preparation of medicines. The prominent ones are *Rasaratnasamuchhāya*, *Rasarājalahshmi*, *Rasasāra* and a chapter on *Bhāvaprakāsa*. *Hikmatu'l-Baligha* was written in the seventeenth century by Mullā Mahamūd Jaunpurī. Mīr Yāhyā wrote a commentary on it entitled *Ash-Shāmsu' I Buzighah Majmu' alu's-Sāna*, an illustrated encyclopaedia describing a number of manufacturing processes like dissolving metals, polishing glass, colouring of different articles and the making of precious stones.

5. Metallurgy

A number of metals were known and extensively used, as for example copper, iron, tin, gold, silver and lead. Utensils, weapons, images and ornaments were made from them. Bronze, brass, steel, and an alloy of lead known as *bidari* show the existence of the use of alloys in the period. Metals and alloys, however, were used primary for ornamental and decorative purposes, rather than for utilitarian ones. There was little technological advance from the point of view of quality, production or organisation. Canons and guns were made of brass, bronze, iron and steel, which were in use from the year 1400. There was hardly any effort to improve quality or enforce economy in production. Low quality fuel was used in the furnaces when casting canons, and the moulds were crude. Copper vessels used in Akbar's household were coated with tin. Lead alloy (*bidari*) consisted of copper, lead

and tin, in the proportion 8 : 2 : 1. It was mainly used for decorative articles.

Iron and steel were known from ancient times in India as the Sun Temple of Konarak and the Iron Pillar of Delhi show. Although much of India's mineral wealth remained unexplored, extraction of metals from the ores was done wherever possible. Iron was extracted by effective though primitive methods. Steel made in southern India was exported to Persia and was in great demand there. This was made from two different kinds of iron, one from Mirtpalli and the other from Kondāpur in proportion of 3:2. Masses of iron which fell as meteors were also processed and used for making swords. In the *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī* the falling of such a meteor is mentioned. This was dug out and after mixing it with some ordinary iron a sword, a dagger and a knife were made out of it. The *'Āin-i-Akbarī* mentions copper mines at Singhana, Udaipur, Kotputli and Chainapur in Rājputāna, Kumaon, and Bairat in Alwar. At Bairat the ore was extremely rich and yielded thirty-five *seers* of the metal to forty *seers* of the ore. Copper and its alloys were largely used in making guns and canons. Gold and silver came to India plentifully from outside. It was refined and put to many uses as ornaments and for decoration, as well as to feed the mint.

(6) Artillery

The manufacture of artillery was perhaps the highest achievement of this period. Many varieties of guns, cannons mortars, matchlocks and pistols were made. Temporary bridges were made on rivers at short notice for the crossing of armies.

The manufacture of canons was one of the heaviest industries. Improvements were made in the method of their manufacture. By the end of the sixteenth century India was making the heaviest guns in the world. The climax was reached with the famous *Malik-i-Maidān* which was cast in bronze at Ahmadnagar. Canons were designed for various purposes. The *Burjī-Shikan* (breaker of towers) was a very heavy gun which was too heavy to move from one place to another. It was placed on the bastions of forts. *Gau-kash* was ox-driven and of

various sizes. *Fīl-kash* was a cannon mounted on a carriage driven by elephants. *Mardum-kash* was a small and light canon which one man could carry. It was also called a *narnāl*.

Hand-guns became increasingly sophisticated. The earliest one had its charge fired by applying a match or burning rope or cord to the priming pan which had a touch hole opening into the barrel. After the seventeenth century Indian guns were equipped with finger-locks. The barrel was made by getting rolls of flat iron, twisted around with one edge running over the other welded by heating and then bored from inside and this technique was the same as was adopted in Europe.⁹

Rockets (*bāns*) were used by Indian armies in place of grenades. These were made of bamboos with iron cylinders containing combustible material and were very effective. They were used by the Muslims, Marāthās and Sikhs. 'The rocket men were trained to give them an elevation proportioned to the varying dimensions of the cylinder, and the distance of the object to be struck. As those projected to any distance described a parabola of considerable height, a single rocket was easily avoided, but when the flight was numerous, the attempt was useless and their momentum was always sufficient to destroy a man or a horse.'¹⁰

Bridges built across rivers were primitive and were just enough for the soldiers to get across and that too often with great risk. Sultān Mahmūd ordered inflated skins to be prepared and ordered his soldiers to swim with their help across the river.¹¹ Fīrūz Shāh got elephants lined up in the water to form a kind of living bridge for his army to cross the Kosī. Ropes were tied across so that anyone who was in danger of being washed away could cling on to them. In *Bābur-nāma*¹² there is mention of a bridge made by Mīr Muhammad, the raftsman, over the Gaṅgā. Bridges of boats were also made, as mentioned by Bernier by a planking forming the footway on which earth

9 *Science and Technology in India*, I.C.C.R., 1973 (A. Rahman and other), p. 11.

10 Surendranath Sen, *The Military System of the Marathas*, p. 71.

11 Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. 2, p. 51.

12 *Bābur-nāma*, p. 599.

mingled with straw was thrown to prevent cattle from slipping.¹³ A more permanent kind of bridge, the Barah-Palah (Twelve Arches) described by Manucci, was built in 1612 at the approach of Delhi.¹⁴

Many changes were made in navigation. Astrolabes used on ships determined time and latitude. An instrument similar to a compass which comprised of a magnetic needle floating on water was in use as early as the thirteenth century.¹⁵

(7) Zoology, Botany and Agriculture

Zoology

Although there were many observations made both by Arabs and Indian writers on animals and their habits, a scientific study of zoology was absent. Among Arab writers on animal life were Abu Ubadiyah (b. 728), Zakarya bin Muhammad bin Mahmūd al-Kazwini and Hamdullā Mustaufi (13th century), Kamāl-ud-dīn Muhammad Ibn Musad'ād Damiri, Ibu Al-Mundhīr and Ibn Juzayy (all 14th century).

Jahāngīr has a number of interesting observations about animal life. The foetus of a baby elephant, he says is born with the feet foremost contrary to what the system is with human beings. He has something to say about the mountain ram, the albinos, the crane, fish and so forth. Having got a lion which he had killed, dissected, he says 'As the braveness of the lion (*sher babar*) has been established, I wished to look at his intestines. After they were extracted it appeared that in a manner contrary to other animals whose gall bladder is outside their livers, the gall bladder of the lion is within his liver. It occurred to me that the courage of the lion may be from this cause.'¹⁶

13 Bernier, *Travels*, p. 380.

14 *Storia do Mogor*, Vol. I, p. 118.

15 Habib Irfan, *The Technology and Economy of Mughal India*, The Dev Raj Chanana Lectures, Delhi, 1970.

16 *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngīr*, 1,351.

Botany

There was no appreciable advance in botany, though here also we have many interesting observations on flora and fauna in the memoirs of Mughal kings like Bābur and Jahāngir.

Many Arab physicians, however made a study of plant life in order to use them for curing diseases. Abu-al-'Abbās al Nabati set down his findings in *Kitab-al-Rihlah* (12th century). Abu Jafar Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Ghafiqi classified and named plants. Abdullah Ibn Ahmad Ibn al-Baytar of Magala (13th century) was the greatest Muslim botanist of the period. Ibn-al-'Awwām Abu Zakāriyā Yahya Ibn Muhammad's *Kitāb-al-Filahah* is the most outstanding Islāmic contribution to botany. It greatly guided medieval agricultural and horticultural practices in India. It covers a wide field. Some of the subjects discussed are, soil preparation, manures, irrigation, grafting, preservation of trees, the growing of cereals and vegetables, plant diseases and their remedies, and the influence of temperature and moisture on the growth of plants.

Curious methods are narrated in the book. Perfumes, syrups, antidotes and even purgatives, according to it, if injected into the branches and roots of fruit trees, gives the fruits the quality of the material injected. Ways of obtaining flowers and fruits off season, devices to have fruits of a shape different from what they usually are, the cultivation of seedless varieties of fruit and large sized vegetables, are some of subjects on which information is given.

Agriculture

New crops introduced in the Mughal period were mainly tobacco and maize. The cultivation of saffron in Kāshmir is mentioned in the chronicles of the age like 'Āin-i-Akbari and *Tuzuk-i-Jahāngirī*. The 'Āin-i-Akbarī says: 'The stalk is white, and when it has sprouted to the height of a finger, it begins to flower one bud after another in succession till there are eight flowers in bloom. It has six lilac tinted petals. Usually among six filaments, three are yellow and three ruddy. The last three yield saffron. When the flowers are over, leaves appear on

the stalk. Once planted it will yield six years in succession.'¹⁷

One of the advanced methods practised in agriculture was dibbling. In this seeds were dropped into holes at regular intervals. It was mainly used for sowing cotton. A number of simple agricultural implements were used. The primary one was of course the plough. In the south there were drill ploughs which sowed the seed equally at fixed intervals. Halcott (1795) gives the following description of the drill plough: 'It has three teeth about eighteen inches long and ten inches apart. A hollow bamboo about three feet long and having a diameter of an inch is inserted through the upper end of each tooth, near the back. These bamboos are set upright, and their upper ends are brought nearly together in the form of a triangle, and inserted through the bottom of a wooden cup. The apparatus is supported and made steady by cords, in the way of shrouds, which lead to different parts of the plough. A woman feeds the cup manually with the grain to be sown as she moves by the side of the drill plough'.¹⁸ There were other instruments also. The scarifier was used both in north of India as well as in the south for loosening surface soil and pulling out weeds. This is a kind of giant rake, with a wooden handle. An iron blade about three feet long and three inches wide fixed to a horizontal beam formed the scarifier's head. Harrows, levellers and hand tools were used. The harrow was a kind of seed drill with the bowl and bamboos removed. A leveller was just a rectangular beam of wood drawn along the ground by bullocks. Hand tools varied from one area to another. The main ones were the *kodālī* or *niamuti*, a kind of spade or shovel, the *khurpā*, a weeding hoe, sickles, sieves of bamboo and the *sūp* (winnowing scoop) for separating grain from husk.

Irrigation facilities were freely provided. Water channels and canals were got excavated by the Delhi Sultāns and the Mughal emperors, particularly Firūz Tughluq and Shāh Jahān. In Aurangzīb's reign one-third of the land was irrigated by canals. Aurangzīb instructed his officers to repair old disused wells and

17 'Ain-i-Akbarī I : 359.

18 Thos Halcott, *The Drill Husbandry in South India*, 1795.

sink new ones. The principal method of lifting water was by persian-wheels having cups of metal.

In horticultural practices the improvement of the quality and yield of fruits was the main objective. The practice of grafting was resorted to for this, particularly in the reign of Shāh Jahān. As a result of this good varieties of peaches, oranges and mangoes were grown.

8. Survey and Measurement

The Hijr calendar remained the most popular, though there were others too.¹⁹ The Hijr year is lunar and its months are adjusted to the course of the moon. Each year has twelve months containing alternately 30 and 29 days, the last month of the intercalary year having, however, 30.²⁰ The Hijra month commences from the evening the new moon is seen. The duration may vary but no month has less than 29 or more than 30 days.

Clepsydras were used to measure the time in the medieval period. *Ghariyāls* or gongs announced the hours in principal towns, and mentioned in *Bābur-nāma*.²¹

There was no uniformity in weights and measures. Weights differed from one place to another. Each emperor, for example fixed the actual weight of a seer according to his own whim. The weight of the maund too varied. In Akbar's time it was 55 lbs., in Jahāngīr's time 66, in Shāh Jahan's 74.²²

In measuring length or distances too there appears to have been no standardisation. Things were measured in *gaz* (yard). But this varied from place to place and from time to time. Akbar tried to fix it as a constant measure, but in practice it remained ununiform. Jahāngīr increased the *gaz* by a fifth of its length. Shāh Jahān again partly reduced it.

19 Akbar started the Ilāhi calender based on solar reckoning, which was more scientific, but Aurangzīb reverted to the lunar year.

20 The intercalary years are the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 10th, 13th, 16th, 18th, 21st, 24th, 26th and 29th of a cycle of 30 years.

21 *Bābur-nāma*, 516.

22 Moreland, p. 330.

Lengths of fields etc. were measured by what was known as the *jarīb*. Initially the *jarīb* measurement was by a hempen rope. This could be made shorter or longer by moisture or sun, and so the measurers could cheat the cultivators. Akbar got the *jarīb* made of bamboos joined together by iron rings and thus as the '*Āin-i-Akbarī* notes 'the hand of dishonest greed was shortened'. Land was measured in the unit of a *bighā*. This was 60 *gaz* by 60 *gaz*. *Kos* was the measure of distance, but this too could never be fixed on any uniform basis.

Textile Technology

India was famous for its textiles, particularly cotton textiles. The different kinds made have already been described.²³ Cotton was gathered and cleaned of seeds, and then loosened and spun. Spinning was largely a job for women and done in the village and city homes. Indian cottons were spun by revolving from left to right (Z-spun) instead of from right to left (S-spun.) The coarse yarn was spun on a heavy one-thread wheel of teakwood roughly made and turned by hand. The looms for weaving were also crude, and as Buchanan remarks 'of imperfect structure'.²⁴ Each loom required one man, assisted by a woman in winding and warping work. Baines describes a loom of two bamboo rollers serving for both the warp and the weft. A single shuttle resembling a large netting needle which performed the job of batten and a pair of paddles completed the apparatus.

The industry made significant progress under the medieval emperors. In the Mughal period a crank handle was used for spinning wheels. Fancy weaving techniques were evolved. Direct block printing was employed to reduce cost of manufacture. For ginning and cleaning cotton the wooden worm-worked roller (*charkhī*) and the bow scutch (*kamān*) were used. Later on rollers were worked by water power.

After weaving, the cloth was bleached and then dyed. Ordinary bleaching was by applying lime and other local ingredients,

²³ See chapter on Trade and Industry *ante*.

²⁴ Buchanan, 2 : 653.

putting the cloth to boil and then beating it vigorously. When the cloth had to be dyed, carbonate of soda was used for bleaching. For permanent prints a solution of impure carbonate of soda, finely powdered myrobalan, *baḥeṛā*, *bēl*, *baḥūl singrī*, castor oil and galls of tamarisk *articulata* was used.²⁵

For dyeing the colouring substances were mostly taken from vegetable products, leaves, roots, barks flowers and fruits. Indigo dyes were very popular. For red dyes lac, madder, safflower, and the bark of the *ladh* tree (*symplocas racemosa*) were the commonest sources. Yellow, crimson, rose, scarlet, different shades of orange and salmon colours were obtained by combining safflower with *harsingār* (*nyctanthes arborists*). Red dyes were also obtained from certain insects like cochineal and sheild louse (*kermes*). Yellow dyes could be got from a number of vegetable products like turmeric, rind of pomegranate, galls of myroblans, *dhāo* flowers (*grislea tomentosa*) *dhāk* (*butea frondosa*) and *harsingār*. Brown dye was obtained from the bark of the *babūl* catechu and henna, black from the galls of tamarisk. Multicolour pattern dyeing, the application of resins to confine colours to patterns and of mordants to take colours, were also common. Wooden blocks for putting impressions on cloth are mentioned in the *Bahr-i-Ajam*.²⁶

Transport and Communication

Cities were connected with each other by tracks on which rest houses were built. These could hardly be called roads. The Tughluq Sultāns improved them for the use of their armies, but it was Sher Shāh who first paid particular attention to road building and to facilities for soldiers. The Mughal emperors gave their attention to road communication, and provided culverts where necessary. Stone and masonry bridges were built across small streams, like the Degh, Gomatī and Sind. These roads, though unmetalled and not completely levelled, were

25 *baheṛā*=terminalia; *bellerica* *babūl singrī*—legume of acacia arabica; *bel* is the Indian wood-apple.

26 *Science and Technology in India*, ICCR, A. Rahman and others, 1973 p.13.

good enough for travellers, pack animals and wheeled carriages driven by oxen horses. Thomas Coryat who travelled between Lahore and Āgrā found the tract so even that he doubted 'whether the like be found within the whole circumference of the habitable world'. He was particularly impressed by the rows of trees on either side of the road.²⁷

Letters were sent by couriers riding horses with relays every four miles. They were also sent by messengers on foot with shorter relays of a third of a mile. Ibn Batūtah describes the system of foot couriers and says they were quicker than the mounted post: 'At every third of a mile there is an inhabited village, outside which there are three pavilions. In these sit men girded up ready to move off, each of whom has a rod a yard and a half long with brass bells at the top. When a courier leaves the town, he takes the letter in the fingers of one hand and the rod with the bells in the other; and runs with all his might. The men in the pavilions on hearing the sound of the bells, prepare to meet him, and when he reaches them one of them takes the letter in his hand and passes on, running with all his might and shaking his rod until he reaches the next station, and so the letter is passed on till it reaches its destination. The post is quicker than the mounted post.'²⁸ Bābur devised a more systematic system, using post horses.²⁹

Having a long coast-line, India had a formidable sea-traffic. Nicolo Conti had high praise for Indian ships: 'They build some ships larger than ours with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks in order to withstand the force of the tempest to which they are so much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments that should one part be shattered, the other portions remaining intact may accomplish voyages'. Akbar took some steps to improve the navy by reconditioning harbours, getting large ships built and having the sterns of boats shaped as wonderful animals which Abu-'l-Fazl observes significantly 'combine terror with

27 Thomas Coryat, *Early Travels in India* (Foster) p. 244.

28 Ibn Batūtah, p. 183.

29 *Bābur-nāma*, 629-30.

amusement'.³⁰ Aurangzīb could not effect much improvement, though he got the number of ships increased, Shivājī organised the Marāthā navy on a grand scale. Ships were made of timber and the beams, inside planks, bottoms, sides, decks keels, stern-posts etc., of teak. A vegetable decoction applied to the crevices prevented water from seeping in. A number of boats plied in Indian rivers for transporting merchandise as was noticed by Ibn Batūtah.³¹

II. Architectural Technique

The Mughals were great builders and their architectural achievements have been described in the chapter on *Art and Architecture*. The summers of India are notable for their heat and discomfort. Bābur mentions the *looh* (hot wind) of the Indian plains specifically in his memoirs. Mughal builders, therefore, tried to fashion some buildings with the object of making them cool retreats in the summer season. 'Three thing oppressed us in Hindustān' Babur says, 'its heat, its violent winds and its dust. Against all three the bath is a protection, for in it, what is known of dust and wind? And in the hot season it is so chilly that one is almost cold'. To get respite from heat, the Mughal kings got hammams and chambered wells built. A well (or *baoli*) of this kind, built by Bābur, had a three storeyed house in it. The architectural style was such that it kept the place cool. The hammams had a series of square, oblong and octagonal chambers connected through narrow corridors. Their extra thick walls ensured insulation against outside atmosphere. There were hollow pavements supported on piers. In some cases pipes were used. Miniature tanks have been found sunk in the thickness of the walls, particularly at corners, and there were furnaces also. This shows that these hammams could be kept cool in summer as well as hot in winter. It is possible that the principle of cooling employed by ice-manufacturers viz., preparing ammonia by heating lime and ammonium chloride (*nausādar*) was also used in these hammams.

30 *Āin-i-Akbarī*, I : 289-90.

31 Ibn Batūtah p. 186.

Malik Ambar, governor of Daulatābād, got a canal constructed which not only filtered water for drinking, but also distributed it through a net-work of earthen pipes all over the town. A seven-storeyed building just within the south wall of Bijāpur city known as the Sat Manzil having an elaborate lay out of cisterns, is proof of the expertness of Muslim plumbers. Another building called Mubārak Khān's Mahal has a domed pavilion of three storeys, and water is carried through the entire building by innumerable pipes inside the masonry. Humāyūn got a wonderful group of buildings made to which he gave the name Khānah-i-Tilism (Magic House). Although the entire building was surrounded by water, it could not get inside, so perfectly were the pressures of the air and water balanced. Jahāngīr got a water-lift constructed which could raise water to a great height. In Akbar's reign Hakīm 'Alī Gilāni got an under-water chamber built. The only entrance to it was at the top by a kind of trap-door. Over the roof there was a reservoir of water, and no one could enter the room except by plunging into it. The emperor thus entered the room once and found it so fascinating that he stayed there for sometime.

The mortar used for these medieval buildings was remarkably strong. One of the ingredients used to fortify it was unrefined sugar. Dr. Helenus Scott praises Indian mortar in a letter (1790) he wrote to the President of the Royal Society. 'In a few hours' he says 'it acquires great solidity and especially the part of it that binds together the larger stones which face the walls'.

Shāhjahānābād city was constructed by two great architects, Ahmad and Hāmid who lived in Shāh Jahān's reign. Ahmad's son Lutf Allāh Muhandis was a great engineer, architect, mathematician, astronomer, calligrapher and poet. Bābur brought with him to India two architects, Yusuf and Īsā. About the other architects and engineers who made the wonders of Mughal architecture possible, we know almost nothing.

Miscellaneous Industries³²

Manufacture of paper started with the Muslim rule at the

32 See also Chapter on Economic Conditions (Chapter 3) *ante*.

beginning of the thirteenth century. Amir Khusrav manufactured Damishqi or Shami paper which was washable. By the time of Muhammad Tughluq writing on paper was a common practice. Kāshmir paper, which was of superior quality, was made from the time of Sultān Zainul Abidīn (1417-67). Sialkot paper was very fine, white and strong. The brands were Mānsinghī, Nimhariri and Khasah-i-Jahāngirī. Zafarābād (in Jaunpur district) was known as 'Paper City' because of its extensive paper industry. Both fine and coarse paper was made here, the coarse one for wrapping goods. Paper of extreme whiteness and lustre was made in Gujarāt at the time of Mahmūd Begarha. Daulatābād was an important centre for paper making. Āgra, Mysore, Ahmadābād, Aurangābād, Bāgalkoṭ (Mahārāshṭra), Lucknow and Poona (Pune) were other prominent places for it. Sharbatī, Qāsim-Begī, Ruba-Kari and Balapuri were some of the types of paper made in these regions. Lucknow paper, which required an elaborate process, was known as Arwali or hemp paper.

Other industries were sugar making, saltpetre, common salt, perfumes, intoxicants, tanning and leather works.³³ ceramics, glass, tiles and the making of ice.

There is also some evidence to show that windmills, cranes, water-mills and automatic firing guns were in existence, though not in any large number.

13. Reasons for Failure

The medieval period of history was one in which a number of foreigners and foreign embassies visited India. Yet the Indian emperors and officers under them were slow in adopting modern techniques. This was, in fact, one of the reasons why the French and then the English got the better of them. Valour in the field of war was not lacking, but it was of no avail against superior and more sophisticated arms. In other spheres, too, Muslim rulers failed to give the same importance to technology as they gave to other things, for instance, to architecture,

33 These have been dealt with in the Chapter on Economic Conditions (Chapter 3).*ante*,

literature and to the propagation of their religion. Science and industry can only follow the lead of their distinguished sponsors. Craftsmen can obviously make only what is required of them. In giving them direction their royal patrons had luxury and opulence in view rather than utilitarianism. That which was beautiful was preferred to that which was useful, the artistic to the scientific, and the religious to the secular. When, for instance, the East India Company sent Jahāngīr an English coach as a present, a sensation was created in the court, and local craftsmen were asked to imitate it. But no effort was made to improve upon the crude concepts of chemistry, metallurgy and so forth.

The spirit of inquiry was lacking, and so were the tools of inquiry. Although Muslim scientists borrowed the best of the Sanskrit and Arabic systems, they failed to build upon them on their own. The instruments and apparatus of scientific research were not modernised, as they were in western countries. In chemistry, for example, the emphasis all along was on alchemy and the philosopher's stone, the legendary *parās*, which could transmute iron to gold. That was the sole pursuit of scholars and kings. Mathematics was particularly neglected, despite its being the very foundation of technology, and astronomy was not studied so much for its scientific value as for casting horoscopes and parading knowledge. Despite the study of astronomy, the reckoning of the year remained unscientific, and Akbar's solitary attempt to rationalise it was not favoured by his successors. On the whole the medieval period of Indian history was a dark one for technology.

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